

משיח

MESSIAH FROM A TRUE
JEWISH PERSPECTIVE



ד"ר
JAMES SCOTT TRIMIN

Mashiach:
The Messiah from a True Jewish Perspective

By James Trimm

Mashiach

Messiah from a True Jewish Perspective

ירים העם ויוכיח שדברו ותוברו ותורתו עומדים

*He will uplift the people and prove
that His Word and His Torah are valid.
- Rabbi Yitzchak Kaduri*

*"Victory cannot tolerate truth,
and if that which is true is spread
before your very eyes, you will reject it,
because you are victor. Whoever
would have truth itself, must drive hence
the spirit of victory; only then may he
prepare to behold the truth".
- Rebbe Nachman of Breslev*

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Preface

The twelfth of Rambam's thirteen Principles of faith says:

I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah; and even though he may tarry, nonetheless, I wait every day for his coming.

(Principle 12- Thirteen Principles of Faith)

The present volume presents the Messiah from a true Jewish perspective, using only the Tanak itself and other ancient Jewish sources such as the Targums, the Talmuds, the Midrashim, the Zohar, the Sefer Yetzirah, the Bahir, the Dead Sea Scrolls and the writings of the first century Jewish writer Philo.

A short word about the textual nature of the Tanak is important before beginning this volume.

Between the years 500 and 950 C.E., a group of Jewish traditionalists known as “Masorites”, standardized the Hebrew text of the Tanak and added written vowels to the text (ancient Hebrew has no written vowels). This standardization of the text resulted in a single text, with little or no variant readings from manuscript to manuscript. There are slight differences between the earliest Masoretic Text manuscripts. Toward the end of the Masoretic era, the last two Masoretic families (Ben Asher and Ben Naphtali) finalized two slightly different Masoretic Texts. Most printed editions today use the Ben Asher text as their source.

Aaron ben Asher, who produced the Ben Asher text was himself a Karaite. Saadia Gaon, who preferred the "Ben Naphtali" system, mentioned Ben-Asher in his critiques of Karaites. In his work Sefer Dikdukei ha Te'amim, Aaron ben Asher wrote, "The prophets... complete the Torah, are as the Torah, and we decide Law from them as we do from the Torah." This belief is known to have been held by Karaites, in contrast mainline Judaism has always maintained that the Prophets could not add to or take from the Torah, and could only be understood as elaborating on the Torah. Furthermore, Documents found in the Cairo Geniza also indicate that ben Asher was a Karaite.

The Masoretic Text is a valuable text. However there are some readings, in which other versions and manuscripts such as the Septuagint, the Peshitta Tanak, and/or the Dead Sea Scrolls, preserve an obviously original reading which was lost from the Masoretic Text. The following are just two examples:

Psalm 145 is an acrostic Psalm. This means that each section of the Psalm, begins with each of the 22 Hebrew letters, from ALEF through TAV. However in the Masoretic Text, the section that should begin with a NUN is missing from the text entirely! However in the Septuagint, the Peshitta Tanak, one Hebrew ms. from the middle ages, and the Dead Sea Scroll copy of this Psalm (11QPs(a)), the missing section appears immediately after Ps. 145:13: "YHWH is faithful to all his promises, and loving toward all he has made." The Hebraic-Roots restores the "lost" NUN section along with an explanatory footnote.

Next let us examine Isaiah 53:11. In the Hebrew of the Masoretic Text, this verse has a serious grammatical problem. The Hebrew of the Masoretic Text reads literally:

*From the travail of his soul he shall see _____
shall be satisfied in his understanding.
My Righteous servant shall justify many
and their iniquities he bears.*

There is very clearly a missing word in the Hebrew, resulting in two verbs in a row "shall see" and "shall be satisfied". What shall he see? Now the missing word "light" DOES appear in the Septuagint, and has also now turned up in two Hebrew copies of Isaiah, found among the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The passage SHOULD read (as it does in the HRV):

*From the travail of his soul he shall see light
and shall be satisfied in his understanding.
My Righteous servant shall justify many
and their iniquities he bears.
(Is. 53:11 HRV translation)*

There are also intentional alterations found in the Masoretic Text. These are recorded in the Masorah. The term “Masorah” refers to the marginal notes which were transmitted by the Masorites along with the Masoretic Text. The notes transmitted in the side margins are called the “Masorah Parva” or “Masorah Katonah”. The notes transmitted on the top and bottom margins are the “Masorah Magna”, also known as “Masorah Gedolah”. Finally the notes transmitted at the end of the text are the Masorah Finalis.

Among the notes preserved in the Masorah Gedolah, are those of the Tikkun Soferim (“Emendations of the Scribes”). Among the Tikkun Soferim, are eighteen notations which indicate that the scribes, finding the original reading irreverent, emended the reading to one less offensive. Each of these eighteen readings are indicated with footnotes in the HRV (see notes to Gen. 18:22; Num. 11:15; 12:12; 1Sam. 3:13; 2Sam. 16:12; 20:1; 1Kn. 12:16; Jeremiah. 2:11; Ezek. 8:17; Hose 4:7; Habakkuk 1:12; Zech. 2:12; Mal. 1:13; Job 7:20; 32:3; Lam. 3:20 and 2Chron. 10:16). These footnotes also compare other textual readings from other witnesses, to these readings.

The Masorah also notes 134 places, where the Masoretic Text reads “Adonai”, but which according to the Masorah, originally read “YHWH”. In each of these locations the HRV has “YHWH” in the main text, along with a footnote explaining that the Masoretic Text reads “Adonai”, but that the Masorah indicates the original reading was “YHWH”. These footnotes also compare readings from other textual witnesses as to whether they support YHWH or Adonai, in the reading in question.

There are also several places where the Masoretic Text reads “Elohim”, but which the Masorah indicates the original reading was “YHWH”. In these verses, the HRV has “ELOHIM” in all caps.

Now since the Masoretic Text is not the perfect, end all text, we are fortunate to have other witnesses to the text of the Tanak. Among these are the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Septuagint and the Peshitta Tanak.

The Dead Sea Scrolls are a collection of scrolls, as well as thousands of fragments of scrolls, found in several caves near the Dead Sea in the Qumran area. Among the scrolls are many biblical manuscripts dating back to a time prior to the first century. These manuscripts give us a sample of the wide variety of textual readings from the pre-Masoretic period. The Dead Sea Scroll biblical manuscripts vary widely, as to text-type. For example two copies of Isaiah found in cave one, agree very closely with the Masoretic Text, while a Hebrew copy of 1 Samuel found in cave four has many important agreements with the Greek LXX (Septuagint), against the Masoretic Text.

The origin of the Septuagint is well known. Flavious Josephus records that Ptolemy Philadelphus (around 250 B.C.E.), entered into negotiations with the Jewish High Priest, to obtain a Greek translation of the Torah for the Library of Alexandria. Ptolemy agreed to release many Jewish prisoners in exchange for the book. The Jewish authorities chose seventy two translators, to produce a Greek translator of the Torah. (Josephus; Antiquities 12:2). Although the Greek Septuagint (named after the Greek for “seventy”) was initially only a translation of the Torah, by no later than 150 B.C.E. the rest of the Tanak had been included as well, since at that time the grandson of Ben Sirach, in his prologue to his Greek translation of his grandfather’s “Wisdom of Ben Sirach”, briefly compares the Hebrew and Greek versions of “the law itself, the prophecies, and the rest of the books”.

The Greek Septuagint is actually very important because it is the earliest known translation of the Tanak into another language, and preserves a Greek translation of a Hebrew text of the Tanak, that existed in the third century C.E. (in the case of the Torah; the second century in the case of the Prophets and the Writings).

The Aramaic Peshitta Tanak is an important, and under-recognized witness to the text of the Tanak. The exact origin of the Peshitta Tanak is unknown. The “Syriac” version of the Tanak, is mentioned by Melito of Sardis as early as the second century C.E. One tradition has it that Hiram, King of Tyre in the days of Solomon, commissioned this Aramaic translation of the Tanak. Another tradition assigns the Peshitta translation as having been commissioned by the King of Assyria, who dispatched Assa the Priest to Samarir (see 2Kn. 17:27-28). According to the Aramaic “Church Father” Bar Hebraeus, the Peshitta Tanak originated when Abgar, king of Edessa, Syria, dispatched scholars to Israel to produce an Aramaic translation of the Tanak (Bar Hebraeus; Comm. To Ps. 10). Wichelshaus suggested that this king was the same as King Izates II of Adiabene. This king, along with his family, converted to Judaism as recorded by Josephus (Ant. 20:69-71). This king had dispatched his five sons to Israel in order for them to study Hebrew and Judaism. Burkitt maintained that the Peshitta Tanak originated not long after the first century C.E., as the product of the Jewish community of Edessa, in Syria.¹

There is certainly a good deal of evidence, to support the Jewish origin of the Peshitta Tanak. The Babylonian Talmud seems to allude to the Peshitta text (see b. Shab. 10b; b.Rosh Hashanna 33b; b.Meg. 10b). The books of Ezekiel and Proverbs in the Aramaic Peshitta, read very similarly to the Aramaic Targums of those same books. The Peshitta Tanak has many Jewish liturgical divisions. For example, the Psalms are divided into five sections as in Jewish copies, and the Torah is divided according to the triennial Torah reading cycle, and festival readings are also indicated (for example Lev. 23:1; see b. Meg. 30b). Moreover the Peshitta Torah also contains many headings which are likely of Jewish origin. For example the ten commandments have the heading עֲסֵרָה פְּתוּחִים “The Ten Commandments” just above Ex. 20:1 and just above Leviticus 17, the Peshitta has the heading

¹ *Early Eastern Christianity*, Burkitt; p. 71ff

נְמוֹסֵי דְקֻרְבָּנָא וּדְדְּבָחָא “The Torah of Offerings and Sacrifices”, (compare with the Talmud b. Meg. 30b). The text of the Aramaic Peshitta was originally written in Hebrew letters, until this was forbidden by Ephraim Syrus in the fourth century C.E., and contains many Judeo-Aramaisms.² Finally, many readings in the Peshitta Aramaic Tanak read Jewish halacha into the text. Many of these are noted in the footnotes of the HRV translation (see notes to Ex. 20:30; Lev. 16:7; Lev. 18:21 and Lev. 24:8). The Aramaic Peshitta translation is a literal Aramaic translation, made directly from a Hebrew text which closely resembled the current Masoretic Text.

² *Encyclopedia Judaica*; Article “Bible”

Chapter 1

A Prophet Like Moses

The identity of the Messiah is both crucial paramount in the Torah. The Torah says:

18 I will raise them up a prophet from among their brothers, like unto you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

19 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which he shall speak in My Name, I will require it of him.

(Deut. 18:18-19 HRV)

The Thirteenth Century Rabbinic commentator Ralbag (Rabbi Levi ben Gershon) writes concerning this passage:

A prophet from the midst of you.- In fact the Messiah is such a Prophet as it is stated in the Midrash [Tanhuma] on the verse "Behold my Servant shall prosper" [Is. 52:13]... Moses by the miracles which he wrought brought a single nation to worship Elohim, but the Messiah will draw all peoples to the worship of Elohim.

(Ralbag on Duet. 18:18)

The Midrash Tanhuma (cited above) says:

It is written, Behold, my servant shall deal wisely, He shall be exalted, and extolled, and be very high (Isaiah 52:13). It means, He shall be more exalted than Abraham of whom it is written, 'I lift up my hand' (Genesis 14:22). He shall be more extolled than Moses of whom it is said, 'As a nursing father beareth the nursing child' (Numbers 11:12). 'And shall be very high'—that is, Messiah shall be higher than the ministering angels.

(Midrash Tanhuma Is. 52:13)

Maimonides, in a letter to a Yemenite community, denounces a man claiming to be the Messiah saying:

The Messiah will be a very great Prophet, greater than all the Prophets with the exception of Moses our teacher...His status will be higher than that of the Prophets and more honorable, Moses alone excepted. The Creator, blessed be He, will single him out with features wherewith He had not singled out Moses; for it is said with references to him, "And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither decide after the hearing of his ears." (Isaiah 11:3)

The Dead Sea Scroll document 4Q175 also speaks of a Messianic Figure (clearly the Messiah) and applies Deut. 18:18-19 indicating that the Prophet "like Moses" was understood clearly as referring to the Messiah as far back as the Hasmoean period.

Now in Deut. 18:19 the Torah says of those who do not give heed to this Messiah "I [Elohim] will require it of him." What does this mean?

The Targum Onkelos to this phrase is even stronger saying "My Word shall take vengeance upon him" and similarly the Greek Septuagint translator rendered the phrase "I shall take vengeance upon him.". Certainly the Torah not only foretells the coming of Messiah, it requires every Torah Observant Jew to accept and follow this Messiah.

Chapter 2

Two Messiahs or One?

The Messianic prophecies of the Tanak can be seen as falling under two categories which often seem to conflict. Many of the prophecies seem to speak of a suffering servant Messiah who suffers and dies to redeem his brothers. Other prophecies seem to speak of a Messiah who comes and reigns from David's throne forever.

One solution to this problem that was proposed anciently was the "two Messiah theory." There are two basic versions of the two Messiah theory:

There are two basic versions of the two Messiah theory:

1. The "rabbinic" two Messiah theory which held to a Messiah the son of Joseph, sometimes called "Ephraim," who would come and suffer to redeem his brothers (like the patriarch Joseph); and a Messiah the son of David who would come and rule from David's throne forever.
2. The "Qumran" two Messiah theory which held to a Priestly Aaronic Messiah and a Kingly Messiah.

The Rabbinic "two Messiah" theory was one of several answers that the Rabbis found for these contradictions. It delegated the lowly, suffering servant passages to Messiah the son of Joseph (sometimes called Ephraim); and the Kingly passages to Messiah the son of David.

A good example of the Ephraim Messiah in Rabbinic literature is a Midrash in which the Messiah is being warned by Elohim of what awaits him:

*Their sins will be upon you like a yoke of iron.
They will choke your spirit. Because of their sins,
Your tongue will cleave to the roof of your mouth.
Do you accept this? If not, I will remove the decree from you.*

*The Messiah replies:
"Master of the worlds, how long will this last?"*

God replies: "Ephraim, my true Messiah, ever since the six days of creation you have taken this ordeal upon yourself. At this moment, your pain is my pain"

Messiah replies: "Master of the worlds, I accept this with gladness in my soul, and joy in my heart, so that not a single one of the House of Israel should perish. Not only for those alive, but also the dead. It is enough that the servant be like the Master.

(Midresh Pesqita Rabbah 36)

Rabbi Dosa (who lived around 250 CE) was a chief advocate of the two Messiah theory. The Talmud records that he taught regarding Zech. 12:10:

What is the cause of the mourning [of Zech. 12:12]--... It is well according to him who explains that the cause is the slaying of Messiah the son of Joseph, since that well agrees with the Scriptural verse:

*And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced,
And they shall mourn for him as one mourns for his only son. (Zech. 12:10)*

(b.Sukkot 52a)

The redemptive role of Messiah is known as "Messiah ben Yoseph" (Messiah the son of Joseph) or "Ephraim" because Messiah would be like the patriarch Joseph. In the Wisdom of Solomon³ we read the following Messianic Prophecy:

Let us see if his words are true: and let us test him by his departure. (Wisdom 2:15-17)

³ The Wisdom of Solomon, a book found among those known as the Apocrypha. Wisdom of Solomon claims to be a book written by Solomon (Wisdom 9:7-8). Skeptics date the book in the first or second century BCE. According to Melito in the second century CE, the Wisdom of Solomon was then considered canonical by both Jews and Christians. The Hebrew version of the Wisdom of Solomon is also mentioned by Ramban (1194-1270 CE) in the preface to his commentary on the Torah. He also quotes from the book. Not only was the Wisdom of Solomon originally written in Hebrew but the original Hebrew survived until at least 1611. The original 1611 edition of the King James Version has a marginal note to the word "pricked" in Wisdom of Solomon 16:11 which says "Hebr. stung."

This actually recalls an account in the Torah concerning the life of Joseph. When his brothers cast Joseph into the pit we read:

20 Come now therefore and let us slay him, and cast him into one of the pits. And we will say, An evil beast has devoured him. And we shall see what will become of his dreams.
(Gen. 37:20 HRV)

There is great Messianic significance to this account. Joseph's life was a type of the first coming of Messiah which parallels the Messiah ben Yoseph. The Suffering Messiah is called Messiah ben Yoseph because his brothers were redeemed by his suffering.

Now the Qumran community also believed in two Messiahs:

They shall govern themselves using the original precepts by which the men of the YAHAD began to be instructed, doing so until there come the Prophet and the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel.
(Manual of Discipline 1Qs Col. 9 lines 10-11)

Two Messiahs are also evident in 1QSa, 1Q28a where the two Messiahs are pictured at a future Messianic banquet table.

Would there be two Messiahs or one Messiah? There does seem to have been confusion on this issue. While 1QS 9:10-11 refers to the "Messiahs of Levi and Israel" The Damascus Document three times refers to the "Messiah of Levi and Israel" (12:23; 14:19; 19:10) was there a question as to whether these would be two Messiahs or one. A tradition found in Midrash Rabbah may provide the answer:

Another exposition of the text, ' My beloved is like a gazelle ' : Israel, explained R. Isaac, said to the Holy One, blessed be He: ' Sovereign of the Universe! Thou hast told us that Thou wilt come to us first. ' ' My beloved is like a gazelle ' ; as the gazelle appears and then disappears, so the first redeemer appeared and then disappeared. R. Berekiah in the name of R. Levi said: Like the first redeemer so will the final redeemer be. The first redeemer was Moses, who appeared to them and then

disappeared. For how long did he disappear from their sight? R. Tanhuma said: Three months; accordingly it is written, And they met Moses and Aaron, etc. (ib. V, 20).² The final redeemer will also appear to them and then disappear. (Midrash Rabbah Bamidbar 11:2)

Clearly here the two redeemers are Moses and the prophet like Moses, the Messiah.

We read in Exodus:

13 And Moshe said unto the people, Fear you not. Stand still, and see the salvation of YHWH, which He will work for you today! For whereas you have seen the Egyptians today, you shall see them again, no more, forever.

14 YHWH will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace. (Ex. 14:13-14 HRV)

Therefore we have a picture of the “salvation of YHWH” in Exodus 14:19-29

19 And the angel of Elohim, who went before the camp of Yisra'el, removed, and went behind them. And the pillar of cloud removed from before them, and stood behind them.

20 And it came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Yisra'el. And there was the cloud and the darkness here, yet gave it light by night there: and the one came not near the other all the night.

21 And Moshe stretched out his hand over the sea. And YHWH caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all the night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.

22 And the children of Yisra'el went into the midst of the sea upon the dry earth, and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

23 And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them into the midst of the sea; all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.

24 And it came to pass in the morning watch, that YHWH looked forth upon the host of the Egyptians, through the pillar of fire and of cloud, and discomfited the host of the Egyptians.

25 And He took off their chariot wheels, and made them to drive heavily, so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Yisra'el, for YHWH fights for them against the Egyptians.

26 And YHWH said unto Moshe: Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians; upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen.

27 And Moshe stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its strength when the morning appeared. And the Egyptians fled against it, and YHWH overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.

28 And the waters returned and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, even all the host of Pharaoh that went in after them into the sea: there remained not so much as one of them.

29 But the children of Yisra'el walked upon dry land, in the midst of the sea, and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

(Ex. 14:19-29 HRV)

The first century Jewish writer Philo comments on this passage saying:

(2.265) Again, when you see, amid the wars and disasters of life, the merciful hand of God and his favourable power held over you and standing in defence of you, be silent yourself; for that champion stands in no need of any assistance. And there are proofs of this fact recorded in the sacred writings; such, for instance, as the verse, "The Lord will fight for us, and ye shall be Silent." (Ex 14:14.)

(2.266) And if you see the genuine offspring and the firstborn of Egypt destroyed, namely desire, and pleasures, and pain, and fear, and iniquity, and mirth, and intemperance, and all the other qualities which are similar and akin to these, then marvel and be silent, dreading the terrible power of God; (Philo; Dreams Book 2; 40; 265-266)

So Philo sees an allegory here where the "Egyptians" represent "desire, and pleasures, and pain, and fear, and iniquity, and mirth, and intemperance, and all the other qualities which are similar and akin to these." In other words Philo sees the Egyptians as representing the sin-nature which the Rabbis call the Yetzer Ra, the Evil inclination.

The first redeemer (Moses) delivered us from the Egyptians, but the second redeemer (the Messiah) would deliver us from the Evil Inclination.

Ramban (Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman) (1194-1270 C.E.) wrote one of the most authoritative Torah commentaries in Rabbinic Judaism. He says on this topic:

And YHWH your Elohim will circumcise your heart (Deut. 30:6) It is this which the Rabbis have said, "If someone comes to purify himself, they assist him" [from on High]. The verse assures you that you will return to Him with all your heart and He will help you.

This following subject is very apparent from Scripture: Since the time of Creation, man has had the power to do as he pleased, to be righteous or wicked. This [grant of free will] applies likewise to the entire Torah period, so that people can gain merit upon choosing the good and punishment for preferring evil. But in the days of the Messiah, the choice of their [genuine] good will be natural; the heart will not desire the improper and it will have no craving whatever for it. This is the "circumcision" mentioned here, for lust and desire are the "foreskin" of the heart, and circumcision of the heart means that it will not covet or desire evil.

Man will return at that time to what he was before the sin of Adam, when by his nature he did what should properly be done, and there were no conflicting desires in his will, as I have explained in Seder Bereshit.

It is this which Scripture states in [the Book of] Jeremiah 31:30], Behold, the days come, says YHWH, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers ..etc. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Eternal, I will put my Law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it.

This is a reference to the annulment of the evil instinct and to the natural performance by the heart of its proper function. Therefore Jeremiah said further, and I will be their Elohim, and they shall be My People; and they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying: 'Know YHWH; 'for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them

Now, it is known that the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth and it is necessary to instruct them, but at that time it will not be necessary to instruct them [to avoid evil] for their evil instinct will then be completely abolished. And so it is declared by Ezekiel, A new heart will I also give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will cause you to walk in My statutes . (Ezekiel 36:26)

*The new heart alludes to man's nature, and the [new] spirit to the desire and will. It is this which our Rabbis have said : "And the years draw nigh, when you shall say: I have no pleasure in them; these are the days of the Messiah, as they will offer opportunity neither for merit nor for guilt," for in the days of the Messiah there will be no [evil] desire in man but he will naturally perform the proper deeds and therefore there will be neither merit nor guilt in them, for merit and guilt are dependent upon desire.
(Ramban on Deut. 29:6)*

This Midrash Rabbah (cited above) preserves a tradition which tells us that the Messiah would, like Moses, be revealed, then disappear and then be revealed again. The coming of Messiah would be like Moses, who was revealed to Israel. Then he disappeared when he ascended to commune with Elohim on Mt. Sinai. While he was gone there was a great apostasy, and many believed he would never return (Ex. 32:1). When he returned he separated and judged the people and condemned those who had not repented (Ex. 32:26-28). The Midrash is telling us that the coming of Messiah would parallel these events.

There is another important parallel between Moses and the Messiah. We read in the Talmud "What is Messiah's name?" Rabbi Shila offers

the answer: “His name is Shiloh, for it is written, ‘until Shiloh comes.’” (b.San. 98b) This Gemara is citing Genesis 49:10:

*The scepter shall not depart from Judah,
nor the staff from between his feet,
until Shiloh comes;
and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.*

The Targums (Onkelos, Pseudo-Jonathan and Yerushalmi) all have “until Messiah comes” in place of “until Shiloh comes”.

The word “Shiloh” has a gematria (numerical value) of 345 which is the same as the value of “HaShem” (“the name”) and El Shaddai. The phrase “Shiloh comes” has a gematria of 358 which is the same as the gematria for “Messiah” and “Moses”

The Zohar says of Gen. 49:10:

*... ”the scepter” referring to the Messiah of the House of
Judah, and “the staff” to the Messiah of the House of Joseph.
“Until Shiloh comes”, this is Moses, the gematria of Shiloh
and Moses being the same [358].
(Zohar 1:25)*

*The word Shiloh, here, is spelt with both a yod and a he,
to allude to the holy supernal name, Yah,
by which the Shekinah shall rise...
(Zohar 1:237)*

Thus the Zohar teaches us that in Genesis 49:10 we have the two Messiahs (or the two comings of Messiah) represented as a “scepter” and a “staff” which are one “Shiloh” and that the one “Shiloh” has Yah within him.

The two comings of Messiah are also evident in the Tanak itself.

In Zechariah 13:4-6 we see the Messiah in his role as judge, he is described as having wounds in the midst of his hands, and this clearly refers us back to Zech 12:10 where the Messiah had been pierced. When we compare Zech. 13:1-3 with Micah 5:8-14 it is clear that they

speak of the same Messianic judge, and if we look at Micah 5:1(2) we find that this Messiah was born in Bethlehem. This points to two comings of Messiah, first to be born in Bethlehem, pierced in the midst of his hands among his own people and then after this to be the Messianic Judge.

Another evidence of the two comings of Messiah can be found in Psalm 110 Where we read:

*1 A Psalm of David. (110:1) YHWH says unto my Adon: Sit you at My right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.
2 The rod of Your strength, YHWH will send out of Tziyon. Rule you in the midst of your enemies.
3 Your people offer themselves willingly in the day of your warfare; in adornments of Set-Apartness: from the womb of the dawn, yours is the dew of your youth.
4 YHWH has sworn, and will not repent: You are a cohen forever after the manner of MalkiTzadek.
5 YHWH, at your right hand, does crush kings in the day of His wrath.
6 He will judge among the nations: He fills it with the dead bodies. He crushes the head over a wide land.
7 He will drink of the brook in the way: therefore will he lift up the head.*

According to the Midrash Tehillim the second “Lord” in Ps. 110:1 is the Messiah:

*The Lord said to my Lord,
Sit you at My right hand.
To the Messiah it will also be said,
and in mercy the throne be established; ...
(Midrash Tehillim on Ps. 110:1)*

Here the two comings of Messiah are evident. The Messiah ascends to YHWH apparently from earth where he has made some enemies. He stays there until his return at which he will “crush kings” and his “enemies will be made his footstool”.

The truth is that the Messiah comes twice. In his first coming he will fill the redemptive role of “Messiah ben Yosef,” suffer and die in order to redeem his brothers, then he would ascend to YHWH and in time he would come again to bring peace to the world, reign from David’s throne forever and judge the world in the role of Messiah ben David.

Chapter 3

The Genealogy of Messiah

The Tanak gives the following criteria for the genealogy of Messiah.

To begin with Messiah must be “seed” of Abraham:

19 And Elohim said: Nay, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Yitz'chak. And I will establish My covenant with him, for an everlasting covenant for his seed after him.
(Gen. 17:19)

Secondly he must descend from Isaac:

17 I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. There shall step forth a star out of Ya'akov, and a scepter shall rise out of Yisra'el, and shall smite through the corners of Mo'av, and break down all the sons of Shet.
(Num. 24:17)

And he must be of the Tribe of Judah:

10 The scepter shall not depart from Y'hudah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes. And unto him, shall the obedience of the peoples be.
(Gen. 49:10)

Who is this “Shiloh”?

This Gemara also asks “What is Messiah’s name?” Rabbi Shila offers the answer: “His name is Shiloh, for it is written, ‘until Shiloh comes.’” (b.San. 98b)

The Targums (Onkelos, Pseudo-Jonathan and Yerushalmi) all have “until Messiah comes” in place of “until Shiloh comes”⁴.

Messiah must also be heir to David’s throne:

⁴ For more on Shiloh and Messiah see Chapter 1

5 (9:6) *For a child is born unto us, a son is given unto us, and the government is upon His shoulder: and His Name is called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty El, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*

6 (9:7) *That the government may be increased, and of peace there be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom: to establish it and to uphold it, through justice and through righteousness, from henceforth even forever. The zeal of YHWH Tzva'ot does perform this.*

(Is. 9:5-6 (6-7))

While this prophecy is written in the perfect verb form (which generally indicates past tense) we have in this passage an example of the Hebrew idiom known as the “prophetic perfect.”

In Hebrew thinking, an action is regarded as being either completed or incomplete. Hebrew, therefore, knows no past, present, or future tenses, but has instead a Perfect and an Imperfect. ... The Hebrew Perfect may be taken to represent action in the past... the equivalent of the English present tense is supplied by the participle.... and the [equivalent of] the English future tense (with other varieties) by the imperfect.

(A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew. 2nd Ed. Clarendon Press; Oxford; 1959; J. A. Weingreen pp. 56-57)

To be strictly accurate we should speak of "forms" rather than "tenses" of the verb, since it is the completeness or otherwise of an action which is being expressed and not the time factor, as in English....

...Hebrew has no "tenses" in the normal sense of the word. Instead there are two "states"...

(Teach Yourself Biblical Hebrew; R.K. Harrison; 1984; pages 68, 80)

Normally a verb in the perfect form would imply a past tense which is why some have wrongly understood this passage to be past tense and that it therefore refers to Hezekiah.

Gesenius' mentions the Prophetic Perfect idiom and describes it this way:

*...he [the prophetic writer] describes the future event as if it had been already seen or heard by him.
(Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar. 2nd edition
Translated by A. E. Crowley; Clarendon Press;
Oxford; 1956; Edited by E. Klautzsch; pp. 312-313)*

There are many examples of the Prophetic Perfect in the Tanak:

*Therefore My people are gone into captivity, for want of knowledge; and their honorable men are famished, and their multitude are parched with thirst.
(Isaiah 5:13)*

In this verse (Is. 5:13) this verb is in the perfect form but it is clearly a future event because the captivity spoken of did not occur in Isaiah's lifetime.

Other examples are:

*He is come to Aiath, he is passed through Migron; at Michmas he layeth up his baggage; They are gone over the pass; they have taken up their lodging at Geba; Ramah trembleth; Gibeath-shaul is fled. Cry thou with a shrill voice, O daughter of Gallim! Hearken, O Laish! O thou poor Anathoth! Madmenah is in mad flight; the inhabitants of Gebim flee to cover. This very day shall he halt at Nob, shaking his hand at the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem.
(Isaiah 10:28-32)*

*Therefore thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, against the shepherds that feed My people: Ye have scattered My flock, and driven them away, and have not taken care of them; behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord.
(Jeremiah 23:2)*

*The virgin of Israel is fallen, she shall no more rise; she is cast down upon her land, there is none to raise her up.
(Amos 5:2)*

In fact the Targum Jonathan to Isaiah 9:6-7 clearly identifies the figure spoken of in Is. 9:6-7 as the Messiah.

*"The prophet says to the house of David, A child has been born to us, a son has been given to us; and he has taken the law upon himself to keep it, and his name has been called from of old, Wonderful counselor, Mighty God, he who lives forever, the Messiah, in whose days peace shall increase upon us"
(Targum Jonathan Is. 9:6)*

And we read in the Midrash Rabbah:

*Rabbi Jose the Galilean says: The name of the Messiah too is "peace"; as it is written: "God the mighty, the everlasting Father, the ruler of peace" (Quoting Is. 9:5-6 (6-7))
(PEREK HA SHALOM; NUMBERS RABBAH XI, 16-20)*

*He said to him: 'I have yet to raise up the Messiah,' of whom it is written, For a child is born to us (Isa. IX, 5). Until I come unto my Lord unto Seir (Gen. XXXIII, 14). R. Samuel b. Nahman said: We have searched all the Scriptures and we have nowhere found [it stated] that Jacob ever came together with Esau at Seir. What then is the meaning of, 'Unto Seir'? Jacob [meant] to say to him: 'I have yet to raise up judges and saviours to exact punishment from you.' Whence this? For it is said, And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau (Obad. I, 21). Israel asked God: 'Master of the Universe, how long shall we remain subjected to him?' He replied: 'Until the day comes of which it is written, There shall step forth a star out of Jacob and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel (Num. XXIV, 17); when a star shall step forth from Jacob and devour the stubble of Esau.'
(Midrash Rabbah - Deuteronomy I:20)*

Also we read in the Zohar:

"As for the expression El Gibbor, the whole verse in which this occurs in an epitome of the holy supernal faith. The word "Wonderful" alludes to the supernal Wisdom, which is wondrous and concealed beyond the reach of all; "Counsellor" is the supernal stream which issues forth perennially and counsels all and waters all; "El" refers to Abraham, "Gibbor" to Issac, and "Everlasting Father" to Jacob, who lays hold of both sides and attains perfection. The "Prince of Peace" is the Zaddik, who brings peace to the world, peace to the House, peace to the Matrona."
(Zohar 3:31a)

Chapter 4

The Place of Messiah's Birth

The Tanak also foretells the place of Messiah's birth. In the Book of Micah we read this prophecy:

But you, Beit-Lechem Ephrathah, which are little to be among the thousands of Y'hudah: out of you, shall one come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Yisra'el; whose goings forth are from of old--from ancient days. (Micah 5:1 (5:2) HRV)

Lest we have any doubt that we have correctly identified this passage as speaking of the Messiah, we can see plainly that our forefathers understood this as well, as the Targum to this verse reads:

*And you, O Bethlehem Ephrath,
you who were too small to be numbered
among the thousands of the house of Judah,
from you shall come forth before Me the Messiah,
to exercise dominion over Israel,
he whose name was mentioned from before,
from the days of creation.
(Targum Jonathan; Micah 5:1)*

The fact that Messiah was to be born at Beit Lechem is also expressed in this story found in the Midrash Rabbah (as well as in the Jerusalem Talmud):

A man was plowing when one of his oxen lowed. An Arab passed by and asked, 'What are you?' He replied, 'I am a Jew.' The Arab said to him, 'Unharness your ox and untie your plow [as a sign of mourning].' 'Why?' 'Because the Temple of the Jews is destroyed.' The Jew asked, 'How do you know this?' 'From the lowing of your ox.' While they were talking the ox lowed again. The Arab said, 'Harness your ox and tie up your plow, because the deliverer of the Jews

*is born.’ ‘What is his name?’ ‘His name is Menachem⁵
[Comforter].’ ‘What is his father’s name?’
‘Chizkiyahu.’ ‘Where do they live?’ He answered, ‘In
Birat-’Arba, in Beit-Lechem of Judea.’
(Midrash Rabbah to Lamentations, Section 51 (on
Lamentations 1:16)) (see also j.Ber. 5a)*

⁵ According to the Talmud “Menachem” (comforter) is one of the names of Messiah (b.San 98a).

Chapter 5

The Date of Messiah's Coming

Isaiah 29 ties the apostasy of Judah to a sealed book:

10 For YHWH has poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and has closed your eyes: the prophets and your heads, the seers, has He covered.

11 And the vision of all this is become unto you as the words of a writing that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray you. And he says, I cannot, for it is sealed.

12 And the writing is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray you. And he says, I am not learned.
(Is. 29:10-12 HRV)

The revealing of that sealed book brings enlightenment and restoration:

18 And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of a book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness.

19 The humble also shall increase their joy in YHWH, and the neediest among men shall exult in HaKadesh of Yisra'el.

20 For the terrible one is brought to nought, and the scorner ceases, and all they that watch for iniquity are cut off:

21 That make a man an offender by words, and lay a snare for him that reproves in the gate, and turn aside the just with a thing of nought.

(Is. 29:18-21 HRV)

Now it is very important to realize that according to Isaiah 29 our people (Judah) are in a state of general blindness/slumber until the sealed book is unsealed.

Now Isaiah does not tell us what this sealed book is or when it is revealed. However that information is given elsewhere in the Tanak. Daniel writes of his own book:

*But you, O Daniel, shut up the words,
and seal the book to the time of the end...*

*...Go your way Daniel: for the words are closed up
and sealed till the time of the end.
(Dan. 12:4, 10)*

So this "sealed book" would seem to be at least in part, the Book of Daniel and it seems to become unsealed in the last days. Remember Daniel wrote after the days of Isaiah so Daniel knew about the sealed book of Is. 29:10-12, 18 when he wrote Dan. 12:4, 10.

So lets bring together Is. 29:10-14, 18 with Daniel 12:4, 10. What do we learn from these two sections of the Tanak taken together? We learn that our people Judah are in an apostasy until some information hidden in the Book of Daniel (and perhaps some other books) is revealed in the last days and the revealing of that information opens our eyes.

So what information is sealed in Daniel? The restoration of our people is usually tied to Messiah... could this hidden information in Daniel relate to the identity of Messiah?

A clue can be found in the Talmud:

*The Targum of the Prophets was composed by Jonathon ben Uzziel under the guidance of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi... and a Bat Kol (voice from heaven) came forth and exclaimed, "Who is this that has revealed My secrets to mankind?"... He further sought to reveal by a Targum the inner meaning of the Ketuvim, but a bat kol went forth and said, "Enough!". What was the reason?-- Because the date of the Messiah is foretold in it.
(b.Megillah 3a)*

Now the only prophetic book of the Ketuvim (the Writings) is Daniel and this is also a book of the Ketuvim for which no Targum was ever made.

The First Century Jewish Historian Josephus makes an interesting comment about Daniel that certainly points to Daniel as the book we are looking for. He writes:

We believe that Daniel conversed with God; for he did not only prophecy of future events, as did the other prophets, but also determined the time of their accomplishment.
(Josephus; Antiquities 10:11:7)

Now the Qumran community who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls believed they had found just this information (the time of the Messiah) in the Book of Daniel:

*The visitation is the Day of Salvation that He has decreed through Isaiah the prophet concerning all the captives, inasmuch as Scripture says, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion "Your ELOHIM reigns". (Isa. 52;7)
This scriptures interpretation : "the mountains" are the prophets, they who were sent to proclaim God's truth and to prophesy to all Israel. "The messengers" is the Anointed of the spirit, of whom Daniel spoke; "After the sixty-two weeks, a Messiah shall be cut off" (Dan. 9:26)
(From 11Q13)*

So now we have learned that there is good reason to believe that the sealed information in the Book of Daniel which opens the eyes of Judah when it is revealed in the last days is the time of Messiah sealed up in Daniel 9:24-27.

Clearly the date of Messiah is to be found in Daniel 9.

Now here is Daniel 9 unsealed:

*1 In the first year of Daryavesh, the son of Achashverosh, of the seed of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans,
2 In the first year of his reign, I Daniel, meditated in the books, over the number of the years, whereof the word of YHWH*

*came to Yirmeyah the prophet, that He would accomplish for the desolations of Yerushalayim seventy years.
(Dan. 9:1-2 HRV)*

Daniel has been doing some Tanak study. He has been reading Jer. 25:11-12; 29:10 about the 70 year exile.

The reason for a seventy year captivity had been that YHWH was punishing Israel for having forsaken the Torah. He punished us with the curses of Deut 28-29 and Lev. 26 as the Torah had warned us. The key issue here was that of the violation of the Sabbath of the Land (Ex. 21:2; 23:11; Lev. 25:2, 20; 26:2, 34; Deut. 15:1)

According to the Torah, if we as a people did not keep the sabbath of the land every seven years we would be cursed (Lev. 26 esp. verse 34)

3 And I set my face unto the YHWH Elohim, to seek by prayer and supplications: with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes.

4 And I prayed unto YHWH my Elohim, and made confession, and said, O YHWH, the great and awful El, who keeps covenant and mercy with them that love You and keep Your commandments,

5 We have sinned, and have dealt iniquitously, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, and have turned aside from Your commandments and from Your ordinances.

6 Neither have we hearkened unto Your servants the prophets, that spoke in Your Name: to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.

7 Unto You, O YHWH, belongs righteousness: but unto us, confusion of face, as at this day. To the men of Y'hudah, and to the inhabitants of Yerushalayim, and unto all Yisra'el, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither You have driven them: because they dealt treacherously with You.

8 O YHWH, to us belongs confusion of face: to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against You.

9 To YHWH our Elohim, belong compassions and forgivenesses, for we have rebelled against Him,

10 Neither have we hearkened to the voice of YHWH our Elohim, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets.

11 Yes, all Yisra'el has transgressed Your Torah, and has turned aside, so as not to hearken to Your voice. And so, there has been poured out upon us, the curse and the oath that is written in the Torah of Moshe, the servant of Elohim, for we have sinned against Him.

12 And He has confirmed His word which He spoke against us, and against our judges that judged us: by bringing upon us a great evil, so that under the whole heaven, has not been done as has been done upon Yerushalayim.

13 As it is written in the Torah of Moshe, all this evil is come upon us: yet have we not entreated the favor of YHWH our Elohim, that we might turn from our iniquities, and have discernment in Your truth!

14 And so, YHWH has watched over the evil and brought it upon us, for YHWH our Elohim is righteous in all His works which He has done: and we have not hearkened to His voice.

15 And now, O YHWH our Elohim, that has brought Your people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and has gotten You renown, as at this day: we have sinned; we have done wickedly.

16 O YHWH, according to all Your righteousness, let Your anger and Your fury, I pray You, be turned away from Your city Yerushalayim--Your Set-Apart mountain. Because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Yerushalayim and Your people are become a reproach to all that are about us.

17 Now therefore, O our Elohim, hearken unto the prayer of Your servant, and to his supplications: and cause Your face to shine, upon Your sanctuary that is desolate, for YHWH's sake.

18 O my Elohim, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and behold our desolations, and the city upon which Your Name is called. For we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteousness, but because of Your great compassions.

19 O YHWH, hear O YHWH, forgive O YHWH; attend and do. Defer not, for Your own sake, O my Elohim: because Your Name is called upon Your city, and Your people.

(Dan. 9:3-19 HRV)

Daniel is very concerned. It has been seventy years and he wants to go home! He is a very old man by now. But he has worried because he knows his Torah. He knows that the Torah warns that if Israel still does not repent after the curse is enacted that Israel will have the punishment multiplied by seven (Lev. 26:18) Daniel is hoping that YHWH will not be enacting the next level punishment. For that would mean 70×7 or another 490 years!

20 And while I was speaking and praying, and confessing my sin, and the sin of my people Yisra'el, and presenting my supplication before YHWH my Elohim, for the Set-Apart mountain of my Elohim;

21 Yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gavri'el, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, approached close to me, about the time of the evening offering.

22 And he made me to understand: and talked with me and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to make you skillful of understanding.

23 At the beginning of your supplications, a word went forth, and I am come to declare it. For you are greatly beloved: therefore look into the word, and understand the vision.

24 Seventy weeks are decreed upon your people, and upon your Set-Apart city: to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sin, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Set-Apart.

(Dan. 9:20-24 HRV)

Daniel learns that there will indeed be at least another 490 years of curses for Israel. The "weeks" here are not seven DAYS but seven YEARS. In fact the Hebrew word here actually just means "seven [somethings]"

25 Know therefore and discern, that from the going forth of the word, to restore and to build Yerushalayim unto Messiah, a prince, shall be seven weeks and threescore and two weeks. It

*shall be built again, with broad place and moat, but in
troubulous times.
(Dan. 9:25 HRV)*

Seven "weeks" here would be 49 years (a Jubilee cycle) plus three score and two weeks ($3 \times 20 + 2 = 62$) is 69 "weeks" or 483 years.

But remember we are not counting years here but actual sabbath year cycles which are specific seven year blocks. In other words this is actually a count of how many sabbath year cycle blocks fall between these two points.

Our starting point is "the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem" which is Ezra 7:11-16:

*11 Now this is the copy, of the letter that the king Artaxerxes
gave unto Ezra the cohen, the scribe--even the scribe of the
words of the commandments of YHWH, and of His
statutes to Yisra'el--
12 Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto Ezra the cohen, the scribe of
the Law of the Elah of heaven, and so forth. And now,
13 I make a decree that all they of the people of Yisra'el, and
their cohanim and the L'vi'im in my realm, that are minded of
their own free will to go with you to Yerushalayim, go:
14 Forasmuch as you are sent of the king and his seven
counsellors, to inquire concerning Y'hudah and Yerushalayim,
according to the Law of your Elah, which is in your hand.
15 And to carry the silver and gold, which the king and his
counsellors have freely offered unto the Elah of Yisra'el,
whose habitation is in Yerushalayim,
16 And all the silver and gold that you shall find, in all the
province of Bavel, with the freewill-offering of the people and
of the cohanim, offering willingly for the house of their Elah
which is in Yerushalayim.
(Ezra 7:11-16 HRV)*

This gives us a start date of 457 BCE. Between that date and the Messiah 69 sabbath year cycle blocks would fall.

26 And after threescore and two weeks, shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself. And the people of a prince that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. And the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war, desolations are determined.
(Dan. 9:26 HRV)

Messiah is cut off after the 62 "weeks" which follow the seven weeks. This elaboration allows us to see that the division of these two blocks (the seven weeks and the 62 weeks) was to show that after the seven weeks "the street shall be built again, and the wall" but the Messiah would not come until after the 62 week block following that.

The Messiah would be "cut off" at that time. This is an idiom meaning that he would be executed. He would not be executed for himself, but for others. Then the people of a prince destroy Jerusalem after that time.

27 And he shall make a firm covenant with many, for one week. And in the midst of the week, he shall cause the sacrifice and the offering to cease. And upon the wing of detestable things, shall be that which causes appallment, and that, until the extermination wholly determined, be poured out upon that which causes appallment.
(Dan. 9:27 HRV)

Remember there were 490 years or 70 "weeks" but we have so far covered only 483 (or 69 "weeks").

This is because the big test of our trust in YHWH is the Sabbath of the land. This is where Israel SHOWS our trust in YHWH by trusting him to provide. The curse would not end until we reinstitute the sabbath of the land (2Chr. 36:21).

So YHWH in his infinite mercy would send the Messiah seven years BEFORE the 490 years would end to call us to repent and return to Torah in time to reinstitute the sabbath of the land BEFORE the 490 years are over.

The curse will not end until we as a people repent and show that by reinstituting the sabbath of the land. When we do that we will finally kick off the last seven years of the curse we have lived with all of this time.

Now if our start point is 457 BCE and 69 "weeks" must fall between this point and the death of Messiah, then Messiah would have to be executed sometime in a window from 26 C.E. to 40 C.E. (depending on how the sabbath year cycles fall).

In fact the Talmud makes it clear that Messiah was expected to come during the first century, but then goes to great lengths to explain why he supposedly missed the appointment:

The Tanna debe Eliyyahu teaches: The world is to exist six thousand years. In the first two thousand there was desolation; two thousand years the Torah flourished; and the next two thousand years is the Messianic era, but through our many iniquities all these years have been lost....

Rab said: All the predestined dates have passed, and the matter [now] depends only on repentance and good deeds. (b.San. 97a-97b)

This passage of Talmud tells us that the school of the prophet Elijah taught that the ages of this world could be broken down into three ages (each of about 2,000 years). 2,000 years of chaos, 2,000 years of Torah and 2,000 years of the days of Messiah. This would place Messiah's coming right around the first century. The Talmud then continues through page 99a trying to explain why Messiah did not come in the first century after all.

Chapter 6

The Death of Messiah

In chapter two we read the following passage from the Talmud concerning the role of Messiah ben Yosef:

In the Talmud Rabbi Dosa (who lived around 250 CE) teaches regarding Zech. 12:10:

*What is the cause of the mourning [of Zech. 12:12]--...
It is well according to him who explains that
the cause is the slaying of Messiah the son of Joseph,
since that well agrees with the Scriptural verse:
And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced,
And they shall mourn for him as one mourns for his
only son. (Zech. 12:10)
(b.Sukkot 52a)*

This is a reference to a Messianic Prophecy in Zechariah:

*And I will pour upon the house of David,
and upon the inhabitants of Yerushalayim,
the spirit of grace and of supplication.
And they shall look unto Me, whom they pierced through,
and they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for his only son:
and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness
for his firstborn.
(Zech. 12:10 HRV)*

In fact the Targum Jonathan to Zechariah also identifies this one being pierced in Zechariah 12:10 as the “Messiah ben Ephraim”.

A key passage should be carefully examined here in the Hebrew:

והביטו אלי את אשר דקרו

“And they shall look toward me whom they pierced.”

Although many attempts have been made to translate this passage in other ways, the Hebrew is obvious. The article את points to the next term אשר דקרו “whom they have pierced” as receiving the action of the verb והביטו “and they shall look” while the preposition אלי must be understood “toward me” as the final י indicates the first person “me”.

Now let us look down to Zechariah 13:4-6:

*4 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be brought to shame, every one through his vision, when he prophesies: neither shall they wear a hairy mantle to deceive.
5 And he shall say, I am no prophet. I am a tiller of the ground, for a man purchased me from my youth.
6 And he shall say to him, What are these wounds in the midst of your hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.
(Zech. 13:4-6 HRV)*

In the King James Version this passage reads:

*5 But he shall say, I am no prophet, I am an husbandman;
for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth.
6 And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds
in your hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which
I was wounded in the house of my friends.
(Zech. 13:5-6 KJV)*

In the Hebrew both verse 5 and verse 6 open with exactly the same word/phrase "V'AMAR" meaning "And [he] shall say...". In verse 5 the KJV has "but he shall say" and in verse 6 the same phrase is translated "and one shall say". The result is to WRONGLY imply that the speaker has shifted at the beginning of verse 6. Thus if we were to use the format of a script we would read:

False Prophet: I am no prophet, I am an husbandman;
for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth.

Messianic Judge: What are these wounds in your hands?

False Prophet: Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.

However the HRV correctly translates both phrases the same as follows:

*5 And he shall say:
"I am no prophet, I am a tiller of the ground;
for a man purchased me from my youth."
6 And he shall say to him: "What are these wounds
in the midst of your hands? Then he shall answer:
"Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends."
(Zech. 13:5-6 HRV)*

Thus in the HRV the shift in speaker does not occur until verse 6b as follows:

False Prophet: I am no prophet, I am a tiller of the ground;
for a man purchased me from my youth."
What are these wounds in the midst of your hands?

Messianic Judge: Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.

In the KJV the figure with the wounds in the midst of his hands is the false prophet while in the Hebrew it is the Messianic Judge. Thus in the HRV version the passage points back to Zech. 12:10 and the one who is "pierced" and forward to Zech 13:7 where a "shepherd" is smitten and his sheep scatter.

Now if we look a few verses down to Zechariah 13:1-3 we see a series of verses that clearly parallel Micah 5:8-14:

Zechariah 13:1-3

1 In that day there shall be a fountain opened, to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Yerushalayim, for purification and for sprinkling.
2 And it shall come to pass in that day, says YHWH Tzva'ot, that **I**

Micah 5:8-14

8 (5:9) Let Your hand be lifted up above Your adversaries, and let all Your enemies be cut off.
9 (5:10) And it shall come to pass in that day, says YHWH, that I will cut off your horses out of the midst of you, and will destroy

will cut off the names of ***the idols out of the land***, and they shall no more be remembered. And also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit, to pass out of the land.

3 And it shall come to pass that, when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother that begot him, shall say unto him, You shall not live, for you speak lies in the Name of YHWH: and his father and his mother that begot him, shall thrust him through when he prophesies.

your chariots.

10 (5:11) And I will cut off the cities of your land, and will throw down all your strongholds,

11 (5:12) And I will cut off witchcrafts out of your hand, and you shall have no more soothsayers.

12 (5:13) ***And I will cut off your graven images and your pillars out of the midst of you***, and you shall no more worship the work of your hands.

13 (5:14) And I will pluck up your Asherim out of the midst of you, and I will destroy your enemies.

14 (5:15) And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the nations, because they hearkened not.

Both passages clearly speak of the coming of Messiah ben David to judge the earth and establish his Messianic Kingdom. Zechariah then goes on (as just shown) to identify this Messiah as having been wounded in the midst of his hands in the house of his friends (among his own people) followed by:

Awake O sword, against My shepherd, and against the man that is near unto Me, says YHWH Tzva'ot. Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn My hand upon the little ones.

(Zech 13:7 HRV)

Certainly the “shepherd” is the Messiah. “Smite the shepherd” must refer to his being “wounded in the midst of [his] hands” (Zech. 13:6) when they “pierced” him (Zech. 12:10).

Now if we look again to Micah 5 to tell us more about this Messianic figure, we read in the first verse:

*But you, Beit-Lechem Ephrathah, which are little to be among the thousands of Y'hudah: out of you, shall one come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Yisra'el; whose goings forth are from of old--from ancient days.
(Micah 5:1 (5:2) HRV)*

As we learned in Chapter 4, this is also a Messianic Prophecy.

So in Zechariah 12 and 13 we have a series of prophecies that Messiah is wounded in the midst of his hands and pierced.

This brings us to Psalm. 22 where we read about a figure whose hands and feet are pierced:

It is not just the so-called NT that understand Psalm 22 as prophetically speaking of Messiah, the concept is also to be found in Midrash Pesikta Rabbati which applies verses from Psalm 22 to the Messiah ben Yosef, the Suffering Messiah also known as "Ephraim":

During the seven-year period preceding the coming of the son of David, iron beams will be brought low and loaded upon his neck until the Messiah's body is bent low. Then he will cry and weep, and his voice will rise to the very height of heaven, and he will say to God: Master of the universe, how much can my strength endure? How much can my spirit endure? How much my breath before it ceases? How much can my limbs suffer? Am I not flesh and blood?

It was because of the ordeal of the son of David that David wept, saying My strength is dried up like a potsherd (Ps. 22:16). During the ordeal of the son of David, the Holy One, blessed be He, will say to him: Ephraim, My true Messiah, long ago, ever since the six days of creation, thou didst take this ordeal upon thyself. At this moment, thy pain is like my pain . . .

At these words, the Messiah will reply: Now I am reconciled. The servant is content to be like his Master.
(Pesikta Rabbati, Piska 36.2, translated by William G. Braude, Yale University Press, pg. 680-681)

It is taught, moreover, that in the month of Nisan the Patriarchs will arise and say to the Messiah: Ephraim, our true Messiah, even though we are thy forbears, thou art greater than we because thou didst suffer for the iniquities of our children, and terrible ordeals befell thee . . . for the sake of Israel thou didst become a laughingstock and a derision among the nations of the earth; and didst sit in darkness, in thick darkness, and thine eyes saw no light, and thy skin cleaved to thy bones, and thy body was as dry as a piece of wood; and thine eyes grew dim from fasting, and thy strength was dried up like a potsherd - all these afflictions on account of the iniquities of our children . . .
(Pesikta Rabbati 37.1, translated by William G. Braude, Yale University Press, pg. 685-686)

Ephraim is a darling son to Me . . . My heart yearneth for him, in mercy I will have mercy upon him, saith the Lord (Jer. 31:20). Why does the verse speak twice of mercy: In mercy I will have mercy upon him? One mercy refers to the time when he will be shut up in prison, a time when the nations of the world will gnash their teeth at him every day, wink their eyes at one another in derision of him, nod their heads at him in contempt, open wide their lips to guffaw, as is said All they that see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head (Ps. 22:8); My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my throat; and thou layest me in the dust of death (Ps. 22:16). Moreover, they will roar over him like lions, as is said They open wide their mouth against me, as a ravening and roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is become like wax; it is melted in mine inmost parts (Ps. 22:14-15).
(Pesikta Rabbati 37.1, translated by William G. Braude, Yale University Press, pg. 686-687)

Perhaps the most amazingly prophetic verse of Psalm 22 is:

*For dogs have encompassed me;
a company of evildoers have enclosed me:
they have pierced my hands and my feet.
(Ps. 22:17 (16))*

Instead of “they have pierced” the Masoretic Text has “like a lion” however “they have pierced” is clearly the correct reading.

In the Hebrew the difference between these two readings is only one letter.

KARU (כָּאֲרוּ) "They have pierced"
(KAR means "pierced" and the -U means "they")

KARI (כָּאֲרִי) "Like a lion"
(K- means "like" and ARI means "lion")

The difference between these two words is between a VAV (ו) and a YUD (י). The misreading of a VAV for a YUD or a YUD for a VAV is a frequent scribal error in Hebrew and Aramaic manuscripts. A VAV is simply a YUD with a long tail. This scribal error is clearly not an intentional change but a common scribal error.

Now let us determine which was the original reading.

Now if we look up this passage in the BHS (*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*). Here we find a footnote that reads:

"pc Mss Edd כָּאֲרוּ, 2Mss Edd כָּאֲרִי cf G(S)..."

To translate this note into lay terms it says:

"A few manuscripts read KARU (כָּאֲרוּ) and two manuscripts read KARI (כָּאֲרִי) and the Greek Septuagint has [pierced]"

In other words while MOST Masoretic Text manuscripts read KARI ("like a lion") SEVERAL read "they have pierced" (two possible spellings) as does the Greek Septuagint.

Now lets look at the oldest extant Hebrew copy of this Psalm which was found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. If we look in *THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS BIBLE* under Psalm 22 on pages 518-519 we read:

"They have pierced my hands and my feet."

We are directed to footnote 41 which says:

"5/6HevPs MT(mss) LXX. Like a lion are MT."

In layman's terms this note means:

In the Dead Sea Scroll manuscript designated "5/6HevPs", some Masoretic Text manuscripts and the Septuagint the reading is "they have pierced" while most Masoretic Text manuscripts read "like a lion are".

A header above this section of Psalm 22 reads:

"Psalm 22 is a favorite among Christians since it is often linked in the New Testament with the suffering and death of Jesus. A well-known and controversial reading is found in verse 16, where the Masoretic Text reads "Like a lion are my hands and feet," whereas the Septuagint has "They have pierced my hands and feet." Among the scrolls the reading in question is found only in the Psalms scroll found at Nahal Hever (abbreviated 5/6HevPs), which reads "They have pierced my hands and my feet"!"

Moreover the grammar is not correct in the Hebrew for "like a lion" since the phrase would lack a verb. Many insert additional words to MAKE the text read "Like a lion [they are at] my hands and my feet". The understood verb of being does not work here because "Like a lion are my hand and my feet" makes about as much sense as "Like a pizza are my hands and my feet".

OK lets review the facts:

1. Only the Masoretic Text (which originated in the 9th Century CE) has "like a lion" and even then some copies have "they have pierced".
2. ALL other versions INCLUDING the Greek Septuagent and Aramaic Peshitta Tanak read "they have pierced".
3. The error itself is an accidental scribal error and NOT an intentional change.
4. By far the OLDEST Hebrew copy of the Psalm from the Dead Sea Scrolls reads "they have pierced"
5. The reading "like a lion" does not fit the grammar.
6. Several copies and versions prior to the first century have "they have pierced" and NO copy or version prior to the 9th century CE has "like a lion."

The truth is that Psalm 22 is a prophecy of the suffering of Messiah. Lets look at this amazingly clear prophecy:

*1 For the Leader: upon Ayelet Ha-Shahar. A Psalm of David.
2 (22:1) My El, my El, why have You forsaken me, and are far from my help at the words of my cry?
3 (22:2) O my Elohim, I call by day, but You answer not: and at night, and there is no surcease for me.
4 (22:3) Yet You are Set-Apart, O You that are enthroned upon the praises of Yisra'el.
5 (22:4) In You did our fathers trust: they trusted, and You did deliver them.
6 (22:5) Unto You they cried, and escaped; in You did they trust, and were not ashamed.
7 (22:6) But I am a worm, and no man: a reproach of men, and despised of the people.
8 (22:7) All they that see me laugh me to scorn, they shoot out the lip, they shake the head:
9 (22:8) Let him commit himself unto YHWH; let Him rescue him; let Him deliver him: seeing He delights in him.*

10 (22:9) *For You are He that took me out of the womb; You made me trust when I was upon my mother's breasts.*
 11 (22:10) *Upon You I have been cast from my birth: You are my El from my mother's womb.*
 12 (22:11) *Be not far from me, for trouble is near: for there is none to help.* 13 (22:12) *Many bulls have encompassed me; strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.*
 14 (22:13) *They open wide their mouth against me, as a ravening and a roaring lion.* 15 (22:14) *I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart is become like wax; it is melted in my inmost parts.*
 16 (22:15) *My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaves to my throat: and You lay me in the dust of death.*
 17 (22:16) *For dogs have encompassed me; a company of evildoers have enclosed me: they have pierced my hands and my feet.*
 18 (22:17) *I may count all my bones: they look and gloat over me.*
 19 (22:18) *They part my garments among them, and for my vesture do they cast lots.*
 20 (22:19) *But You, O YHWH, be not far off: O You my strength, hasten to help me.*
 21 (22:20) *Deliver my soul from the sword; my only one from the power of the dog.*
 22 (22:21) *Save me from the lion's mouth; yes, from the horns of the wild oxen do You answer me.*
 23 (22:22) *I will declare Your Name unto my brothers; in the midst of the assembly will I praise You.*
 24 (22:23) *You that fear YHWH, praise Him: all you the seed of Ya'akov, glorify Him and stand in awe of Him--all you the seed of Yisra'el.*
 25 (22:24) *For He has not despised nor abhorred the lowliness of the poor, neither has He hid His face from him: but when he cried unto Him, He heard.*
 26 (22:25) *From You comes my praise in the great assembly: I will pay my vows before them that fear Him.*
 27 (22:26) *Let the humble eat and be satisfied; let them praise YHWH that seek after Him: may your heart be quickened forever!*

28 (22:27) All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto YHWH, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before You.

29 (22:28) For the kingdom is YHWH's, and He is the ruler over the nations.

30 (22:29) All the fat ones of the earth shall eat and worship; all they that go down to the dust shall kneel before Him--even he that cannot keep his soul alive.

31 (22:30) A seed shall serve him; it shall be told of YHWH unto the next generation.

32 (22:31) They shall come and shall declare His righteousness, unto a people that shall be born; that He has done it.

(Psalm 22)

Another of the most important prophecies concerning the death of Messiah is the Suffering Servant prophecy of Isaiah. The Suffering Servant Song (Is. 52:7-53:12) is the fourth of four "Servant Songs" in Isaiah. These four servant songs are to be found in: Isaiah 42:1-9; Isaiah 49:1-12; Isaiah 50:4-11 and Isaiah 52:7-53:12

Now before we look at Is. 52:7-53:12 we should first look at the first three servant songs in Isaiah. Let us first look at Is. 42:1-9:

1 Behold My servant, whom I uphold; My chosen, in whom My soul delights: I have put My spirit upon him; he shall make the right to go forth to the nations.

2 He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.

3 A bruised reed shall he not break, and the dimly burning wick shall he not quench: he shall make the right to go forth according to the truth.

4 He shall not fail nor be crushed, till he has set the right in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his Torah.

5 Thus says El YHWH, He that created the heavens and stretched them forth, He that spread forth the earth and that which comes out of it, He that gives breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein:

6 I YHWH have called you in righteousness, and have taken hold of your hand, and kept you, and set you for a covenant of the people, for a light of the nations.

7 To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.

8 I am YHWH, that is My Name: and My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graven images.

9 Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them.

(Is. 42:1-9 HRV)

Is. 42:1 says:

*Behold my servant, whom I uphold;
my elect in whom my soul delights;
I have put my spirit upon him;
he shall bring forth judgement to the Gentiles.*

This is a close parallel to another passage in Isaiah:

*And the Spirit of YHWH shall rest upon him...
with righteousness shall he judge...
(Is. 11:2, 4)*

Now EVERYONE agrees that Is. 11:1f speaks of the Messiah and it is clear that Is. 42:1 speaks of the same individual. (Also Is. 61:1 is parallel.)

Ok now lets look at Is. 49:1-12:

*1 Listen, O isles, unto me: and hearken, you peoples, from far.
YHWH has called me from the womb, from the innermost parts of my mother, has He made mention of my name.*

2 And He has made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of His hand has He hid me, and He has made me a polished shaft. In His quiver has He concealed me,

3 And He said unto me: You are My servant, Yisra'el, in whom I will be glorified.

4 But I said, I have labored in vain. I have spent my strength for nought and vanity: yet surely my right is with YHWH, and my recompense with my Elohim.

5 And now, says YHWH, that formed me from the womb to be His servant; to bring Ya'akov back to Him, and that Yisra'el be gathered unto Him: for I am honorable in the eyes of YHWH, and my Elohim is become my strength.

6 Yes, He says: It is too light a thing, that you should be My servant to raise up the tribes of Ya'akov, and to restore the offspring of Yisra'el. I will also give you for a light of the nations, that My salvation may be unto the end of the earth.

7 Thus says YHWH, the Redeemer of Yisra'el, his Set-apart One, to him who is despised of men, to him who is abhorred of the nation, to a servant of rulers: kings shall see and arise; princes, and they shall prostrate themselves, because of YHWH that is faithful, even HaKadesh of Yisra'el, who has chosen you.

8 Thus says YHWH: In an acceptable time have I answered you, and in a day of salvation have I helped you, and I will preserve you, and give you for a covenant of the people: to raise up the land; to cause to inherit the desolate heritages;

9 Saying to the prisoners, Go forth. To them that are in darkness, Show yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and in all high hills shall be their pasture.

10 They shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for He that has compassion on them will lead them, even by the springs of water will He guide them.

11 And I will make all My mountains--a way--and My highways shall be raised on high.

*12 Behold, these shall come from far, and behold, these from the north and from the west, and these from the land of Sinim.
(Is. 49:1-12 HRV)*

It is the claim of the anti missionaries that 49:3 closes the case and clearly identifies the Servant as Israel. However in context that identification must be allegorical. In Is. 49:1-12 the servant is clearly NOT literally Israel because in verses 5 & 6 the servant brings Jacob (Israel) back to YHWH; raises up the tribes of Israel and restore the preserved of Israel. Clearly then the next two verses reveal that the servant is NOT Israel. So why does Is. 49:3 make that identification?

Because there is an allegorical relationship Between Messiah and Israel. Both for example are the Son of Elohim. Both had miraculous births. Both were taken into Egypt to save them in their youth. Both were called out of Egypt. Rome tried to kill both of them. etc.

In verse 7 most translations state that a "nation" abhors the servant. However some Rabbinic translations (JPS and Soncino) state that the "nations" abhor the servant. This makes a big difference. If the word is singular "nation" then by context the "nation" would be Israel. Thus proving once again that the servant is not Israel because Israel cannot abhor Israel. However if the reading is "nations" then this fits with the interpretation that the servant is Israel and that in Is. 53 Israel is being oppressed by the nations. So one must ask: who is being honest? This is pivotal. Is the word "nation(s)" in Is. 49:7 plural or singular? The word is in the Hebrew SINGULAR thus proving once again that the servant is NOT Israel.

4 The Adonai YHWH has given me the tongue of them that are taught, that I should know how to sustain with words, him that is weary. He wakens morning by morning. He wakens my ear to hear, as they that are taught.

5 The Adonai YHWH has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away backward.

6 I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.

7 For the Adonai YHWH will help me, therefore have I not been confounded. Therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.

8 He is near that justifies me: who will contend with me? Let us stand up together: who is my adversary? Let him come near to me.

9 Behold, the Adonai YHWH will help me: who is he that shall condemn me? Behold, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up.

10 Who is among you that fears YHWH, that obeys the voice of His servant, though he walks in darkness, and has no light? Let him trust in the Name of YHWH, and stay upon his Elohim.

11 Behold, all you that kindle a fire; that gird yourselves with firebrands. Begone in the flame of your fire, and among the

*brands that you have kindled. This shall you have of My hand:
you shall lie down in sorrow.
(Is. 50:4-11)*

Finally lets look at Is. 52:7-53:12

*7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the
messengers of good tidings- -that announces peace, the
harbinger of good tidings; that announces salvation; that says
unto Tziyon, Your Elohim reigns!*

*8 Hark! Your watchmen! They lift up the voice. Together do
they sing, for they shall see eye to eye, YHWH returning to
Tziyon.*

*9 Break forth into joy; sing together, you waste places of
Yerushalayim: for YHWH has comforted His people; He has
redeemed Yerushalayim.*

*10 YHWH has made bare, His Set-Apart arm in the eyes of all
the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation
of our Elohim.*

*11 Depart you! Depart you! Go you out from thence. Touch no
unclean thing; go you out of the midst of her. Be you clean,
you that bear the vessels of YHWH.*

*12 For you shall not go out in haste, neither shall you go by
flight: for YHWH will go before you, and the Elohim of
Yisra'el will be your rearward.*

*13 Behold, My servant shall prosper: he shall be exalted and
lifted up, and shall be very high.*

*14 According as many were appalled at him,¹³⁵ so marred
was his visage unlike that of a man: and his form, unlike that
of the sons of men.*

*15 So shall he sprinkle⁶ many nations: kings shall shut their
mouths because of him, for that which had not been told them,*

⁶ “sprinkle” Hebrew: יָזַח YEZEH the imperfect hiphil form of the verb יָזַח “to spurt or splatter”. Some translators have rendered this word as “startle” based largely on the Greek LXX reading “wonder”, however even these translators translate the word “sprinkle” in all other passages (such as Lev. 5:9; 8:11; Num. 19:18-19). The Aramaic Peshitta translates this word into Aramaic with מְדַכֵּא MEDAKE “purify” taken from the Aramaic root מְדַךְ “to season or sprinkle”. The Aramaic Targum Jonathan understands the word here to mean יְבַדֵּר Y’BADAR “scatter”.

shall they see, and that which they had not heard, shall they perceive.

1 Who would have believed our report? And to whom has the arm of YHWH been revealed?

2 For he shot up right forth as a sapling, and as a root out of a dry ground. He had no form nor comeliness, that we should look upon him, nor beauty that we should delight in him.

3 He was despised, and forsaken of men--a man of pains, and acquainted with disease, and as one from whom men hide their face: He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.

4 Surely our diseases He did bear, and our pains He carried: whereas we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of Elohim, and afflicted.

5 But He was pierced because of our transgressions; He was crushed because of our iniquities: the chastisement of our welfare was upon Him, and with His stripes, we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned every one to his own way, and YHWH has made to light on Him, the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed, though He humbled Himself, and opened not His mouth. As a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before her shearers is dumb: yes, He opened not His mouth.

8 By oppression and judgment He was taken away, and with His generation who did reason? For He was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people⁷ to whom the stroke was due.

9 And He⁸ made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich, His tomb⁹: although He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth.

10 Yet it pleased YHWH to crush Him. He has put Him to suffering to see if His soul would offer itself, as a guilt

⁷ "my people" Hebrew: עַמִּי this is the reading of the Masoretic Text, Aramaic Peshitta Tanak, the Aramaic of Targum Jonathan and Greek LXX. One of the two major Hebrew copies of Yesha'yah found at Qumran has עַמִּי "his people" (although this is not noted in the Dead Sea Scrolls Bible).

⁸ "he" following the Masoretic Text, the Aramaic Peshitta Tanak and the Aramaic Targum Jonathan. A copy found at Qumran has "they" while the Greek LXX has "I".

⁹ tomb or death - The Masoretic Text has "his deaths"- b'motayv. However, the Dead Sea Scrolls (1QIsa) has "b'moto"- "in His death" singular as do the Peshitta Tanakh and the LXX.

offering: that He might see His seed, prolong His days, and that the purpose of YHWH might prosper by His hand.

11 From the travail of His soul, He shall see light, and shall be satisfied in His understanding. My Righteous servant shall justify many, and their iniquities, He bears.

12 Therefore will I divide Him a portion among the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the mighty, because He bared His soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors: yet He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

(Is. 52:7-53:12 HRV)

The key questions are:

Who is the speaker?

Who is the servant?

Who is "we"?

Who is "he"?

OK who is the speaker?

Three answers have been proposed:

1. Isaiah

2. YHWH

3. The Gentile Kings of the Earth

We will examine number 1 last.

First: Is the speaker YHWH?

The speaker cannot be YHWH because the speaker has sins (53:6)

Second: Is the speaker The Gentile Kings of the Earth (As Tovia Singer claims) ?

The speaker cannot be the Gentile Kings because:

1. The chiastic structure in 52:7, 10; 53:1 reveals the speaker is the same as the individual on the mountains in 52:7 which NO ONE claims is the Gentile Kings.

Is. 52:7

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him
that brings goodnews,
that publishes peace;
that brings goodnews of good,
that publishes salvation,
that says to Zion: "Your God reigns!"

Is. 52:10

A. YHWH

B. has made bare his holy arm

C. in the eyes of all the nations

C. and all the ends of the earth

B. shall see the salvation

A. of our God.

Is. 53:1

Who has believed our report?

And to whom is the arm of YHWH revealed?

Clearly the "arm of YHWH" in 53:1 is the "report" of 53:1

Clearly the "arm of YHWH" in 53:1 is "his holy arm" in 52:10

Clearly "see the salvation" of 52:10 is "bare his holy arm" of 52:10

Clearly the "publishes salvation" of 52:7 = "see the salvation" of 52:10

Therefore the "report" of 53:1f is being given by the figure on the mountains who is certainly NOT the Gentile Kings.

2. The text of 52:15 specifically tells us that the Gentile kings are silent they have nothing to say, they are NOT delivering a report. If it was important that we think that the speaker was the Gentile kings of 2:15 then why would YHWH have the text tell us they are silent. in fact the Targum actually states that the kings "shall be silent because of him"

The speaker is Isaiah. In fact there is no reason not to believe that the speaker is Isaiah.

Now who is the servant?

Is the servant Israel?

The servant cannot be Israel because:

1. The servant is a voluntary sufferer (Is. 53:7, 12b)
2. The servant is contrasted with the speaker who counts himself with a group (Israel) saying "we" throughout. (Is. 53:6) If "we" is Israel and "we" is being contrasted with "he" then "he" the servant cannot be Israel.
3. The servant is an innocent sufferer (53:6, 9) but Israel has guilt. Israel suffers BECAUSE we have sinned (see Deut. 28-29 and Lev. 26)

53:10 says "he shall see his seed" and anti-missionaries make much of this. They say that zera cannot be used allegorically. In fact the word zera (seed) is used allegorically in Jewish literature to refer to the scattered tribes. In fact the Targum on this passage understands "seed" allegorically and paraphrases it "the Kingdom of their Messiah". In fact then term seed is used allegorically in the very next chapter (Is. 54:1-3)

In the Hebrew of the Masoretic Text Isaiah 53:11 has a serious grammatical problem.

The Hebrew of the Masoretic Text reads literally:

*From the travail of his soul he shall see _____
shall be satisfied in his understanding.
My Righteous servant shall justify many
and their iniquities he bears.*

There is very clearly a missing word in the Hebrew resulting in two verbs in a row "shall see" and "shall be satisfied". What shall he see? Now the missing word "light" DOES appear in the Septuagint and has also now turned up in two Hebrew copies of Isaiah found at Qumran.

The passage SHOULD read (as it does in the HRV):

*From the travail of his soul he shall see light
and shall be satisfied in his understanding.
My Righteous servant shall justify many
and their iniquities he bears.
(Is. 53:11 HRV translation)*

In fact the Targum Jonthan to Isaiah plainly proclaims the servant of the Suffering Servant Song in Isaiah to be the Messiah:

*Behold, My Servant the Messiah shall prosper;
he shall be exalted and great and very powerful.
(Targum Jonathan on Is. 52:13)*

*It is the will of the Lord to purify and to acquit
as innocent the remnant of His people, to cleanse
their souls of sin, so that they may see the Kingdom
of their Messiah, have many sons and daughters,
enjoy long life, and observe the Torah of the Lord,
prospering according to his will.
(Targum Jonathan on Is. 53:10)*

The Babylonian Talmud also applies this section of Isaiah as speaking of the Messiah:

*The Rabanan say that that Messiah's name is the Suffering
Scholar of Rabbi's House (or the Leper Scholar) for it is*

written, "Surely he has born our grief and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted." (Is. 53:4)
(b.San. 98a)

The Messiah- what is his name? The House of Rabbi Judah the Holy One says: The Sick One "Surely he has born our sicknesses" (Is. 53:4)
(b.San. 98b)

Rabbi Joshua came upon the prophet Elijah as he was standing at the entrance of Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai's cave. He asked him: "When is the Messiah coming?" The other replied: "Go and ask him yourself." "Where shall I find him?" "Before the gates of Rome." "By what sign shall I know him?" "He is sitting among the poor people and covered with wounds." (see Is. 53:5)
(b.San. 98a)

The same application is made in the Midrash Rabbah:

Rabbi Jose the Galilean says: Great is peace-for at the hour the King Messiah reveals himself unto Israel, he will begin in no other way than with "peace" as it is written: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger of goodnews, that announces peace." (Is. 52:7)
(Perek HaShalom in some Talmud editions and Numbers Rabbah XI, 16-20)

Rambam says:

Regarding the mission by which Messiah will present himself Isaiah states, "He grew like a tender plant and as a root out of dry land At him will kings shut their mouths, for what had not been told unto them shall they see, and what they never heard shall they understand." (Is. 52:15-53:2)

Perhaps most interesting is the application of Isaiah 53 to the Messiah in the Zohar:

*In the Garden of Eden there is a hall that is called the "hall of the afflicted." Now it is into this hall that the Messiah goes and summons all the afflictions and pains and sufferings of Israel to come upon him. And so they all come upon him. And had he not eased the children of Israel of their sorrow, and taken their burden upon himself, there would be none who could endure the suffering of Israel in penalty of neglecting the Torah. Thus it is written: "Surely our diseases he did bear and our pains he carried." (Is. 53:5) As long as the children of Israel dwelt in the Holy Land, they averted all afflictions and sufferings from the world by the service of the sanctuary and by sacrifice. But now it is the Messiah who is averting them from the habitants of the world.
(Zohar 2:212a)*

The Messiah like the service of the sanctuary and the sacrifice has taken upon himself the sins of Israel. Messiah is the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 52:7-53:12

*3 He was despised, and forsaken of men--a man of pains, and acquainted with disease, and as one from whom men hide their face: He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.
4 Surely our diseases He did bear, and our pains He carried: whereas we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of Elohim, and afflicted.
5 But He was pierced because of our transgressions; He was crushed because of our iniquities: the chastisement of our welfare was upon Him, and with His stripes, we are healed.
6 All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned every one to his own way, and
YHWH has made to light on Him, the iniquity of us all.
7 He was oppressed, though He humbled Himself, and opened not His mouth. As a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a*

sheep that before her shearers is dumb: yes, He opened not His mouth.

8 By oppression and judgment He was taken away, and with His generation who did reason? For He was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due.

(Isaiah 53:3-8 HRV)

Chapter 7

The Resurrection of Messiah

Among the Messianic prophecies we read in the "Suffering Servant Song" of Isaiah 53 is a prophecy of the resurrection of Messiah.

In the Hebrew of the Masoretic Text Isaiah 53:11 has a serious grammatical problem.

The Hebrew of the Masoretic Text reads literally:

*From the travail of his soul he shall see _____
shall be satisfied in his understanding.
My Righteous servant shall justify many
and their iniquities he bears.*

There is very clearly a missing word in the Hebrew resulting in two verbs in a row "shall see" and "shall be satisfied". What shall he see? Many translations have sought to force sense out of the Masoretic Text where there is no sense.

Now the missing word "light" DOES appear in the Septuagint and has also now turned up in two Hebrew copies of Isaiah found at Qumran.

The passage SHOULD read (as it does in the Hebraic Roots Version):

*From the travail of his soul he shall see light
and shall be satisfied in his understanding.
My Righteous servant shall justify many
and their iniquities he bears.
(Is. 53:11 HRV translation)*

(In the HRV the missing word "light" is restored with an explanatory footnote).

Now if we look at the verses leading up to verse 11 we see that this figure who "shall see light" died and was buried in the grave in the previous three verses:

8 By oppression and judgment He was taken away, and with His generation who did reason? For He was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due.

9 And He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich, His tomb: although He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth.

10 Yet it pleased YHWH to crush Him. He has put Him to suffering to see if His soul would offer itself, as a guilt offering: that He might see His seed, prolong His days, and that the purpose of YHWH might prosper by His hand.

(Is. 53:8-10 HRV)

So then in verse 11 we see this figure resurrected as he sees light after his death and burial:

From the travail of his soul he shall see light and shall be satisfied in his understanding.

My Righteous servant shall justify many and their iniquities he bears.

(Is. 53:11 HRV translation)

One of the most definitive prophecies of the resurrection of Messiah is found in Amos 9:11:

In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof. And I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old,

(Amos 9:11 HRV)

There is a tradition recorded in the Mishna tractate Sanhedrin which deals with which "apostate doctrines" were regarded as worthy of disfellowshipment. The Mishna passage in question reads:

*All Israelites have a share in the world to come...
And these are the ones who have no part in the World
to Come: He who says, the resurrection of the dead is a
teaching which is not derived from the Torah...
(m.San. 10:1)*

The Talmud is made up the Mishna and the Gemara. In the Talmud a passage of Mishna is followed by commentary known as Gemara. In the Talmud the Gemara to m.Sanhedrin 10:1 begins at b.Sanhedrin 90a and runs through b.Sanhedrin 99a.

At around b.Sanhedrin 97a this section of Gemara transitions from a discussion of the doctrine of the resurrection (in 90a-96b) to a discussion on the timing of the coming of Messiah (in 97a-99a). This is not just a random shift, but a logical transition.

The transition point of this Gemara reads as follows:

*Rabbi Nahman said to Rabbi Isaac: "Have you heard
when Bar Nafle will come?"
"Who is Bar Nafle?", he asked.
"Messiah," he answered,
"Do you call Messiah Bar Nafle?"
"Even so," he rejoined, "As it is written: "In that day,
I will raise up the tabernacle of David ha-nofelet [that
is fallen]. (Amos 9:11)"
(b.San 97a)*

This Gemara defines "David" in this passage to refer to the Davidic Messiah and the "tabernacle" to refer to his physical body. Since the context of this Gemara is that of the resurrection, "raise up" in this context most certainly refers to "resurrection" This is very profound, because we have in this Gemara a reference to a "resurrection" of the physical body of Messiah being seen in Amos 9:11.

There is also evidence that this understanding of the “Tabernacle of David” in Amos 9:11-12 as being a reference to the Messiah existed by the first century. A document found among the Dead Sea Scrolls in cave 4 gives the following commentary in Amos 9:11:

*“I shall raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen”
(Amos 9:11). This passage describes the fallen Branch
of David, whom He shall raise up to deliver Israel.
(Q174 III, 12-13)*

The "Branch of David" is a clear reference to the figure described in Isaiah 11 which everyone agrees is a Messianic prophecy.

The “Tabernacle of David” was understood as a reference to the body of the Messiah, and that its being “raised up” was understood as a prophecy of a resurrection of the Messiah after he had “fallen” (died).

Certainly this is the figure who declares in Psalm 16:

*10 For You will not abandon my soul to Sh’ol,
neither will You suffer Your righteous one to see the
pit.
(Ps. 16:10 HRV)*

And as we find in Hosea:

*1 Come, and let us return unto YHWH: for He has torn,
and He will heal us; He has smitten, and He will bind
us up.
2 After two days will He revive us; on the third day, He
will raise us up, that we may live in His presence.
(Hosea 6:1-2 HRV)*

The pashat (literal) interpretation of this verse applies to the House of Israel, however there is an allegorical relationship between Messiah and Israel

Moreover there is a special allegorical relationship between the House of Israel (as opposed to the House of Judah) and the role of Messiah as the Suffering servant "Messiah ben Yoseph" who dies to redeem his brothers.

Chapter 8

The Messiah as the Incarnate Word

The first century Jewish writer Philo writes that the Messiah and “The Word” are one and the same:

*The head of all things is the eternal Word (Logos) of the eternal God, under which, as if it were his feet or other limbs, is placed the whole world, over which He passes and firmly stands. Now it is not because Messiah is Lord that He passes and sits over the whole world, for His seat with His Father and God but because for its perfect fullness the world is in need of the care and superintendence of the best ordered dispensation, and for its own complete piety, of the Divine Word (Logos), just as living creatures (need) a head, without which it is impossible to live.
(Q&A on Exodus, II, 117)*

We read in the Book of Baruch¹⁰:

*29 Who has gone up into heaven, and taken her [wisdom]
and brought her down from the clouds?
30 Who has gone over the sea, and found her,
and will buy her for pure gold?
(Baruch 3:29-30)*

This is a reference back to the Torah where we read:

*9 And YHWH your Elohim will make you over-abundant in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, and in the fruit of your cattle, and in the fruit of your land, for good; for YHWH will again rejoice over you for good, as He rejoiced over your fathers,
10 If you shall hearken to the voice of YHWH your Elohim, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this Book of the Torah; if you turn unto YHWH your Elohim with all your heart, and with all your soul.*

¹⁰ Baruch was the Scribe of Jeremiah. The Book of Baruch is a book found among those known as the Apocrypha.

11 For this commandment which I command you this day, it is not too hard for you, neither is it far off.

12 It is not in heaven, that you should say: 'Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, and make us to hear it, that we may do it?'

13 Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say: 'Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, and make us to hear it, that we may do it?'

14 But the word is very near unto you, in your mouth, and in your heart, that you may do it.

15 See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil,

16 In that I command you this day to love YHWH your Elohim, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His ordinances; then you shall live and multiply, and YHWH your Elohim shall bless you in the land where you go in to possess it.

(Deut. 30:9-16)

Then a few lines later Baruch writes:

37 Afterward she appeared upon earth and lived among men.

4:1 She is the book of the commandments of Elohim, and the Torah that endures forever.

All who hold fast will live, and those who forsake her fast will die.

(Baruch 3:37-4:1)

The Torah has long been recognized in Judaism as a living entity through which YHWH created the Heavens and the Earth. As we read in the Midrash Rabbah:

The Torah declares: 'I was the working tool of the Holy One, blessed be He.' In human practice, when a mortal king builds a palace, he builds it not with his own skill but with the skill of an architect. The architect moreover does not build it out of his head, but employs plans and diagrams to know how to arrange the chambers and the wicket doors. Thus Elohim consulted the Torah and created the world, while the Torah declares, IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED (1,1), BEGINNING

*referring to the Torah, as in the verse, YHWH made me as the beginning of His way (Prov. VIII, 22).
(Genesis Rabbah 1:5)*

The First Century Jewish Writer Philo also says that the Word reconciles two sides of Elohim:

*...the Divine Word (Logos)... fills all things and becomes a mediator and arbitrator for the two sides....from the Divine Word (Logos), as from a spring, there divide and break forth two powers. One is the creative through which the Artificer placed and ordered all things. This is named "God". And the royal, since through it the Creator rules over created things. This is called "Lord" And from these two powers have grown the others. For by the side of the creative power there grows the propitious of which is named "beneficial" while (besides) the royal the legislative, of which is aptly named "punitive". And below these and beside them is the ark.
(Philo on Q&A on Exodus, II.68)*

This brings us to the true understanding of the Shema which opens with:

*SH'MA YISRAEL YHWH ELOHEYNU YHWH ECHAD
"Hear O Israel, YHWH, our Elohim, YHWH is one (ECHAD)"
(Deut. 6:4)*

Let us examine other passages in the Torah to understand how this word ECHAD ("one") is used in the Torah:

*Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one [ECHAD] flesh.
(Gen. 2:24)*

*And YHWH said, "Indeed the people are one [ECHAD] and they all have one language...
(Gen. 11:6)*

Thus it is clear that the word ECHAD in no way requires a singularity and can refer to a composite unity.

Now let us to explore how this passage is understood by the Zohar:

The [profession of] unity that every day is [a profession of] unity is to be understood and to be perceived. We have said in many places that this prayer is a profession of Unity that is proclaimed:

"Hear O Yisrael, YHWH" first, [then] "Eloheynu" [and] "YHWH" they are all One and thus He is called "One".

Behold, these are three names, how can they be one? Is it because we call them one? (literally: And also concerning the proclamation that we call them one?). How these are one can only through the vision of the Holy Sprit be known. And these are through the vision of the closed eye (or the hidden eye) To make known that these three are one.

And this is the mystery of the voice that is heard. The voice is one. And is three GAUNIN: fire and air and water. And all these are one in the mystery of the voice.

And also here "YHWH, Eloheynu, YHWH" these are One. Three GAUNIN that are One. And this is the voice of the act of a son of man in [proclaiming] the Unity. And to which he sees by the Unity of the "All" from Eyn Sof (the Infinite One) to the end of the "All". Because of the voice in which it is done, in these are three that are one.

And this is the [profession] of the daily profession of Unity that is revealed in the mystery of the Holy Spirit.

And there are many GAUNIN that are a Unity, and all of them are true, what the one does, that the other does, and what that one does, the other does.

(Zohar 2:43)

(The Aramaic word GA'UN (sing.)/GAUNIN (plural) comes from the word for "color" and refers to an "aspect, element, substance, essence".)

Thus the Zohar understands the Sh'ma to mean that YHWH, Elohim and YHWH are three GA'UNIN. This section of the Zohar also recalls a reading from the Sefer Yetzirah:

*Three “mothers”: Alef; Mem and Shin
Their foundation is a pan of merit
a pan of liability
and the tongue of decree deciding between them.
(Sefer Yetzirah 3:1)*

*Three “mothers”, Alef, Mem, Shin
in the universe are air, water, fire...
(Sefer Yetzirah 3:4a)*

(Note: The letter SHIN has a gematria (numerical value) of 300 which is the same as the gematria of the phrase "Ruach Elohim" (the Spirit of Elohim).)

As it we will demonstrate the “tongue of decree deciding between them” is the Middle Pillar of the Godhead which reconciles the two outer pillars of the Godhead.

The Zohar also calls these three GAUNIN the three pillars of the Godhead. The Zohar teaches, like Philo, that the two outer pillars are reconciled by the middle pillar just as the “tongue of decree” decides between the two pans of the scale in the Sefer Yetzirah. The Zohar reads as follows:

Why, it may be asked, was it necessary to repeat the word “light” in this verse? The answer is that the first “light” refers to the primordial light which is of the Right Hand, and is destined for the “end of days”; while the second “light” refers to the Left Hand, which issues from the Right.

The next words, “And God saw the light that it was good” (Gen. 1:4), refer to the pillar which standing midway between them, writes both sides, and therefore when the unity of the three, right, left, and middle, was complete, “it was good”, since there could be no completion until the third had appeared to remove the strife between Right and Left, as it is

written, "And God separated between the light and between the darkness." ...

*This is the Middle Pillar: Ki Tov (that it was good) threw light above and below and on all other sides, in virtue of YHWH, the name which embraces all sides.
(Zohar 1:16b)*

According to the Zohar the Middle Pillar of the Godhead is the Son of Yah:

*Better is a neighbor that is near, than a brother far off.
This neighbor is the Middle Pillar in the Godhead,
which is the Son of Yah.
(Zohar 2:115)*

The Zohar also says of the Son of Yah:

*The Holy One, blessed be He, has a son, whose glory (tifret) shines from one end of the world to another. He is a great and mighty tree, whose head reaches heaven, and whose roots are set in the holy ground, and his name is "Mispar" and his place is in the uppermost heaven... as it is written, "The heavens declare (me-SaPRim) the glory (tifret) of God" (Ps. 19:1). Were it not for this "Mispar" there would be neither hosts nor offspring in any of the worlds.
(Zohar 2:105a)*

This Zohar passage is intended to recall a passage from the Bahir:

*Why are they called Sephirot?
Because it is written (Ps. 19:2),
"The heavens declare (me-SaPRim) the glory (tifret) of God."
(Bahir 125)*

The Zohar also says concerning the Son of Yah:

We may also translate "he who withholds blessings from the Son" (Prov. 11:26), whom the Father and Mother have CROWNED and blessed with many blessings,

and concerning whom they commanded, "Kiss the SON lest he be angry" (Ps. 2:12), since he is invested with judgment (GEVURAH) and with mercy (CHESED) (Zohar 3:191b)

According to the Zohar, the Middle Pillar of the Godhead is not only known as the “Son of Yah” but also as “Metatron”:

*Better is a neighbor that is near, than a brother far off.
This neighbor is the Middle Pillar in the godhead,
which is the Son of Yah.
(Zohar 2:115)*

The Middle Pillar is also known as “Metatron”:

*The Middle Pillar [of the godhead] is Metatron,
Who has accomplished peace above,
According to the glorious state there.
(Zohar 3:227)*

In the Zohar we are also told that Metatron is “the firstborn”:

*And Abraham said to his oldest servant of his house... " (Gen. 24:2) Who is this of whom it said "his servant?" In what sense must this be understood? Who is this servant? R. Nehori answered:
"It is in no other sense to be understood than expressed in the word "His servant," His servant, the servant of Elohim, the chief to His service. And who is he? Metatron, as said. He is appointed to glorify the bodies which are in the grave. This is the meaning of the words "Abraham said to His servant" that is to the servant of Elohim. The servant is Metatron, the eldest of His [YHWH's] House, who is the firstborn of all creatures of Elohim, who is the ruler of all He has; because Elohim has committed to Him the government over all His hosts.
(Zohar 1:129b)*

So in Judaism both Israel and “The Son of Yah” are identified as the “first-born Son of YHWH”.

According to the first century Jewish writer Philo, this firstborn Son of Elohim is also known as "The Word."

Philo Writes of the Word (Logos):

*For there are, as it seems, two temples belonging to God; one being this world, in which the high priest is the divine word, his own firstborn son. The other is the rational soul, the priest of which is the real true man,
(On Dreams 215)*

*And if there be not as yet any one who is worthy to be called a son of God, nevertheless let him labour earnestly to be adorned according to his Firstborn Word, the eldest of his angels, as the great archangel of many names; for He is called, "the Authority", and "the Name of God", and "the Word", and "man according to God's image", and "He who sees Israel". . . For even if we are not yet suitable to be called the sons of God, still we may deserve to be called the children of his eternal image, of his most sacred Word; for the image of God is his most ancient word.
(On the Confusion of Tongues XXVIII:146-147)*

Thus, indeed, being a shepherd is a good thing, so that it is justly attributed, not only to kings, and to wise men, and to souls who are perfectly purified, but also to God, the ruler of all things; and he who confirms this is not any ordinary person, but a prophet, whom it is good to believe, he namely who wrote the psalms; for he speaks thus, "The Lord is my shepherd, and he shall cause me to lack Nothing;" (Ps. 23:1.) and let every one in his turn say the same thing, for it is very becoming to every man who loves God to study such a song as this, but above all this world should sing it. For God, like a shepherd and a king, governs (as if they were a flock of sheep) the earth, and the water, and the air, and the fire, and all the plants, and living creatures that are in them, whether mortal or divine; and he regulates the nature of the heaven, and the periodical revolutions of the sun and moon, and the variations and harmonious movements of the other stars, ruling them

according to law and justice; appointing, as their immediate superintendent, his own right reason, his first-born son, who is to receive the charge of this sacred company, as the lieutenant of the great king; for it is said somewhere, "Behold, I am he! I will send my messenger before thy face, who shall keep thee in the Road." (Ex. 23:20.)
(On Husbandry 50-51)

The Targums were authoritative Aramaic paraphrases of the books of the Tanak which were read in the synagogues along with the Hebrew of the Torah and Haftorah readings. Whenever the Targums come to passages where YHWH is anthropomorphised or seen, or where two or more YHWHs are indicated by the text, the Targums will often substitute "The Word [Memra] of YHWH" for YHWH. For example in Gen. 19:4 the Tanak has:

Then YHWH caused to rain upon S'dom and upon Amora, brimstone and fire from YHWH, out of heaven.

The Hebrew grammar here indicates that one YHWH rains fire from another YHWH) But Targum Jonathan substitutes "The Word of YHWH/the LORD" for the first of the two YHWHs as follows:

And the Word of the YHWH caused to descend upon the peoples of Sodom and Gommorah, brimstone and fire from the YHWH in heaven.

In another example the Torah has:

Ex. 24:1a (YHWH is the speaker, see Ex. 20:1-2)

Now He [YHWH] said to Moses, "come up to YHWH..."

But Targum Jonathan paraphrases the speaker in Ex. 20:1 with the substitution "the Word [Memra] of YHWH" in place of "YHWH."

And the Word of the Lord spoke all these glorious words...

So it would seem that one of these entities called "YHWH" in these Torah passages was actually understood by the Targumists as being

the "Word of YHWH." It was, according to Targum Onkelos, this Word of YHWH that Abraham trusted in:

*And Abraham trusted in the Word [Memra] of YHWH,
and He counted it to him for righteousness.
(Targum Onkelos Gen. 15:6)*

Moreover Abraham prayed in the name of the Word of YHWH:

*And Abraham worshipped and prayed
in the name of the Word [Memra] of YHWH,
and said, "You are YHWH who does see, but You cannot be
seen.
(Jerusalem Targum Gen. 22:14)*

Note that here Abraham prays "in the name of the Word of YHWH" to the YHWH who "cannot be seen." Here two YHWHs are very apparent. Abraham is praying in the name of the Word of YHWH but is praying to the YHWH who cannot be seen. This idea is reinforced elsewhere as follows:

And Hagar praised and prayed

*in the name of the Word [Memra] Of YHWH
who had revealed Himself to her...
(Jerusalem Targum Gen. 16:3)*

It was this Word of YHWH that Jacob also trusted in:

*And Jacob vowed a vow, saying,
"If the Word [Memra] of YHWH will be my support,
and will keep me in the way that I go,
and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,
so that I come again to my father's house in peace;
then shall the Word [Memra] of YHWH be my God.
(Targum Onkelos on Gen. 28:20-21)*

King David also urged Israel to trust in the Word of Yah as the Targum of Psalm 62 reads:

*Trust in the Word of Yah at all times,
O people of the house of Israel!
Pour out before Him the sighings of your heart;
Say, God is our trust forever.
(Targum on Psalm 62:9)*

This "Word of YHWH" was, according to Targum Jonathan, the Creator:

*And the Word [Memra] of YHWH
created man in his likeness,
in the likeness of YHWH, YHWH created,
male and female created He them.
(Targ. Jonathan Gen. 1:27)*

This idea is also put forward in the Jerusalem Targum:

And the Word [Memra] of YHWH said to Moses:
"I am He who said unto the world 'Be!' and it was:
and who in the future shall say to it 'Be!' and it shall be."
And He said: "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel:
'I Am' has sent me to you."
(Jerusalem Targum Ex. 3:14)

The Fragmentary Targum of the Torah also expresses that the Word of YHWH was the Creator:

*The first night, when the "Word of YHWH"
was revealed to the world in order to create it,
the world was desolate and void,
and darkness spread over the face of the abyss
and the "Word of the Lord" was bright and illuminating
and He called it the first night.
(Fragmentary Targum Ex. 12:42)*

That the Word of YHWH was the Creator can also be seen in the Tanak itself:

*By the Word of YHWH were the heavens made,
And all the hosts of them by the Spirit of His mouth. (Ps. 33:6)*

The Word was also the covenant maker. For example the Noachdic covenant was between the Word and all mankind:

*And YHWH said to Noah,
"This is the token of the covenant
which I have established between My Word [Memra]
and between all flesh that is upon the earth.
(Targum Onkelos Gen. 9:17)*

The Word also made the Abrahamic covenant as Targum Onkelos also paraphrases:

*And I will establish my covenant
between My Word [Memra] and between you...
(Targum Onkelos Gen. 17:7)*

The Word of YHWH was also the giver of the Mosaic Covenant and the Torah as the Jerusalem Targum (as quoted above) makes the Torah giver "the Word of YHWH" in Ex. 20:1. It was to the Word that Jacob turned to for salvation:

*Our father Jacob said: "My soul does not wait for salvation
such as that wrought by Gideon, the son of Joash,
for that was but temporal; neither for a salvation
like that of Samson, which was only transitory;
but for that salvation which You have promised to come,
through Your Word unto Your people, the children of Israel;
for your salvation my soul hopes."
(Targum Jonathan Gen. 49:18)*

That the Word of YHWH is the savior is expressed elsewhere:

*But Israel shall be saved by the Word of YHWH
with an everlasting salvation...
By the Word of YHWH shall all the seed of Israel be justified...
(Targum Jonathan Is. 45:17, 25)*

*But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah,
and I will save them by the Word of YHWH, their God.
(Targum Jonathan Hosea 1:7)*

The first century Jew Philo makes a very interesting comment concerning the Torah command of the cities of refuge (Num. 35:6-28; Josh. 20:1-9). The Torah says:

*And the assembly shall deliver the manslayer, out of the hand of the avenger of blood, and the assembly shall restore him to his city of refuge, where he was fled. And he shall dwell therein until the death of the High Priest, who was anointed with the Set-Apart oil.
(Numbers 35:25)*

Philo makes an interesting observation on this passage, he writes:

The fourth and last of the points which we proposed to discuss, is the appointing as a period for the return of the fugitives the death of the high priest, which, if taken in the literal sense, causes me great perplexity; for a very unequal punishment is imposed by this enactment on those who have done the very same things, since some will be in banishment for a longer time, and others for a shorter time; for some of the high priests live to a very old age, and others die very early, and some are appointed while young men, and others not until they are old. And again of those who are convicted of unintentional homicide, some have been banished at the beginning of the high priest's entrance into office, and some when the high priest has been at the very point of death. So that some are deprived of their country for a very long time, and others suffer the same infliction only for a day, if it chance to be so; after which they lift up their heads, and exult, and so return among those whose nearest relations have been slain by them. This difficult and scarcely explicable perplexity we may escape if we adopt the inner and allegorical explanation in accordance with natural philosophy. For we say that the high priest is not a man, but is the Word (Logos) of God, who has not only no participation in intentional errors, but none even in those which are involuntary. (On Flight 106-108)

Elsewhere Philo writes:

XXVI. (82) But Melchisedek shall bring forward wine instead of water, and shall give your souls to drink, and shall cheer them with unmixed wine, in order that they may be wholly occupied with a divine intoxication, more sober than sobriety itself. For the Word is a priest, having, as its inheritance the true God, and entertaining lofty and sublime and magnificent ideas about him, "for he is the priest of the most high God." {38} {Genesis 14:18.} Not that there is any other God who is not the most high; for God being one, is in the heaven above, and in the earth beneath, and there is no other besides Him." {39} {Deuteronomy 4:39.} But he sets in motion the notion of the Most High, from his conceiving of God not in a low and grovelling spirit, but in one of exceeding greatness, and exceeding sublimity, apart from any conceptions of matter. ("De Allegoriis Legum," iii. 26).

Here Philo alludes to Psalm 110 which reads (in its entirety):

*1 A Psalm of David. (110:1) YHWH says unto my Adon: Sit you at My right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.
2 The rod of Your strength, YHWH will send out of Tziyon. Rule you in the midst of your enemies.
3 Your people offer themselves willingly in the day of your warfare; in adornments of Set-Apartness: from the womb of the dawn, yours is the dew of your youth.
4 YHWH has sworn, and will not repent: You are a cohen forever after the manner of MalkiTzadek.
5 YHWH, at your right hand, does crush kings in the day of His wrath.
6 He will judge among the nations: He fills it with the dead bodies. He crushes the head over a wide land.
7 He will drink of the brook in the way: therefore will he lift up the head.
(Ps. 110:1-7 HRV)*

The Midrash Tehillim (Midrash on Psalms) identifies the “My Adon” of Psalm 110:1 as Messiah. According to the Midrash Tehillim:

*The Lord said to my Lord,
Sit you at My right hand.
To the Messiah it will also be said,
and in mercy the throne be established; ...
(Midrash Tehillim on Ps. 110:1)*

While in verse 5 the Masoretic Text has “Adonai”, this is one of 134 places where the Masoretic Text reads “Adonai” but which the Masorah indicates that the text originally read “YHWH” and had been altered by the scribes in an attempt on their part to clarify the text. A copy found at the Cairo Geniza¹¹ also has “YHWH” here.

The scribes changed YHWH to Adonai in verse 5 because they did not want you to “mistakenly” identify the “My Adon” on the right hand of YHWH in verse 1 with the “YHWH” on the right and in verse 5.

As Jeremiah warns us:

*8 How do you say, We are wise, and the Torah of YHWH is
with us? Behold, certainly in vain, has wrought the vain pen of
the scribes.
9 The wise men are ashamed; they are dismayed and taken.
Behold, they have rejected the word of YHWH, and what
wisdom is in them?
(Jer. 8:8-9 HRV)*

Verse 5 tells us that the “Adon” on the right is also “YHWH”. The original reading of Psalm 110:5 identified the Adon on the right hand of YHWH as YHWH.

The Zohar make it clear that the “My Adon” of Psalm 110:1 is YHWH. According to the Zohar in this verse one aspect of the Godhead is speaking to another aspect of the Godhead:

Rabbi Simeon further gave an exposition of the verse:

¹¹ The Cairo Geniza discovery, are an archive of ancient Jewish manuscripts discovered in the 1890’s, in the synagogue of Fostat-Cairo, Egypt, which had been originally built in 882 C.E. Among the documents discovered were biblical manuscripts from a time when the Masoretic Text was not yet finalized.

*The Lord said to my Lord,
 Sit at my right hand
 Until I make your enemies your footstool (Ps. 110:1)
 "The Lord says unto my Lord":
 to wit, the upper grade [of the Godhead],
 said to the lower [grade of the Godhead],
 "sit at My right hand", ...
 (Zohar 1:50b)*

Verse 4 of Psalm 110 identifies this figure as "Melchizadek." This Melchizadek figure was especially important to the Essenes. One document found at Qumran commonly called the Melchizadek document (11Q13) deals with this Melchizadek figure. This document quotes from Isaiah 61:1 but substitutes "Melchizadek" for YHWH. The document goes on to call this Melchizadek figure both "El" and "Elohim" and to identify him with the Messiah who is "cut-off" in Dan. 9:27:

(...) And concerning what Scripture says, "In this year of Jubilee you shall return, everyone of you, to your property" (Lev. 25:13) And what is also written; "And this is the manner of the remission; every creditor shall remit the claim that is held against a neighbor, not exacting it of a neighbor who is a member of the community, because God's remission has been proclaimed" (Deut.15:2) the interpretation is that it applies to the Last Days and concerns the captives, just as Isaiah said: "To proclaim the Jubilee to the captives" (Isa. 61:1) (...) just as (...) and from the inheritance of Melchizedek, for (... Melchizedek), who will return them to what is rightfully theirs. He will proclaim to them the Jubilee, thereby releasing them from the debt of all their sins. He shall proclaim this decree in the first week of the jubilee period that follows nine jubilee periods. Then the "Day of Atonement" shall follow after the tenth jubilee period, when he shall atone for all the Sons of Light, and the people who are predestined to Melchizedek. (...) upon them (...) For this is the time decreed for the "Year of Melchizedek's favor", and by his might he will judge Elohim's holy ones and so establish a righteous kingdom, as it is written about him in the Songs of David ; "An ELOHIM has taken his place in the council of EL; in the midst of the ELOHIM he

holds judgment" (Ps. 82:1). Scripture also says about him; "Over it take your seat in the highest heaven; A divine being will judge the peoples" (Ps. 7:7-8) Concerning what scripture says ; " How long will you judge unjustly , and show partiality with the wicked? Selah" (Ps. 82:2), the interpretation applies to Belial and the spirits predestined to him, because all of them have rebelled, turning from Elohim`s precepts and so becoming utterly wicked. Therefore Melchizedek will thoroughly prosecute the vengeance required by Elohim`s statutes. Also, he will deliver all the captives from the power of Belial, and from the power of all the spirits destined to him. Allied with him will be all the "righteous ELOHIM"(Isa. 61:3). (The ...) is that whi(ch ...all) the ELOHIM.

The visitation is the Day of Salvation that He has decreed through Isaiah the prophet concerning all the captives, inasmuch as Scripture says, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion "Your ELOHIM reigns"." (Isa. 52:7) This scriptures interpretation : "the mountains" are the prophets, they who were sent to proclaim Elohim`s truth and to prophesy to all Israel. "The messengers" is the Anointed of the spirit, of whom Daniel spoke; "After the sixty-two weeks, an Anointed shall be cut off" (Dan. 9:26) The "messenger who brings good news, who announces Salvation" is the one of whom it is written; "to proclaim the year of YHWH`s favor , the day of the vengeance of our Elohim; to comfort all who mourn" (Isa. 61:2) This scripture`s interpretation: he is to instruct them about all the periods of history for eternity (... and in the statutes) of the truth. (...) (.... dominion) that passes from Belial and returns to the Sons of Light (...) (...) by the judgment of God, just as t is written concerning him; "who says to Zion "Your ELOHIM reigns" (Isa. 52:7) "Zion" is the congregation of all the sons of righteousness, who uphold the covenant and turn from walking in the way of the people. "Your ELOHIM" is Melchizedek, who will deliver them from the power of Belial. Concerning what scripture says, "Then you shall have the trumpet sounded loud; in the seventh month . . . " (Lev. 25;9) (11Q13 Col. 2)

Thus the Zohar teaches that the Sh'ma (Deut. 6:4) refers to the three pillars of the Godhead as being ECHAD and that the Middle Pillar of the Godhead reconciles the two outer Pillars. The Zohar further teaches that this Middle Pillar of the Godhead is the Son of Yah, the firstborn of all creation who will glorify all the bodies which are in the grave. This is the Word of YHWH in whom Abraham placed his faith and who made the covenant with Israel, and which is the Savior and is the Messiah. This is the Melchizadek figure who is the High Priest in the heavenly Holy of Holies who is the redeemer of Israel.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

It has been said that our beliefs must be big enough to include all of the facts, open enough to be tested and flexible enough to change.

Rebbe Nachman of Breslev put it well when he said:

Victory cannot tolerate truth, and if that which is true is spread before your very eyes, you will reject it, because you are victor. Whoever would have truth itself, must drive hence the spirit of victory; only then may he prepare to behold the truth.

At this point you might expect me to connect the dot for you and plainly reveal the identity of the Messiah. But the beauty of this book has been that you do not need me to connect the dots for you, all you needed was for me to show you where the dots are. You are quite capable of connecting the dots for yourself. The truth points to itself, and thus you now know who the Messiah is, and have no need for me to tell you, you know already for yourself. The whole point of this book is don't believe me, believe your Scriptures, believe Elohim.

One final word, it is important to know that the Messiah's coming is not to abolish the Torah or to create a new religion, his coming is to uphold the Torah and to be the Jewish Messiah of Judaism.

If you would like to learn more about the Messiah of Torah Observant Judaism, contact us for more information.

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Appendix I

The Closed MEM and the Seed of a Woman

We read in Isaiah:

*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given:
and the government shall be upon his shoulder:
and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor,
The mighty God, The everlasting Father,
The Prince of Peace.*

*Of the increase of his government and peace there shall
be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom,
to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with
justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD
of hosts will perform this.
(Is. 9:6-7 KJV)*

In Chapter 3 we demonstrated that this passage is a Messianic prophecy.

Before going further there are two things the reader needs to know.

First off the Hebrew letter MEM (מ) is always written as a closed MEM (ם) when it is written at the end of a word, but as an open mem (מ) when it is written at the beginning of the word.

Secondly there is a traditional anomaly which is preserved in the Massoretic Text.

The letter MEM in the word L'MAR'BEH (למרבה) ("of the increase") is written as a closed final MEM when it should be written with an open MEM.

The Talmud discusses the use of the abnormal closed final MEM in this passage as follows:

Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end (Is. 9:6). R. Tanhum said: Bar Kappara expounded in Sepphoris, Why is every mem in the middle of a word open, whilst this is closed? — The Holy One, blessed be He, wished to appoint Hezekiah as the Messiah, and Sennacherib as Gog and Magog; whereupon the Attribute of Justice said before the Holy One, blessed be He: 'Sovereign of the Universe! If Thou didst not make David the Messiah, who uttered so many hymns and psalms before Thee, wilt Thou appoint Hezekiah as such, who did not hymn Thee in spite of all these miracles which Thou wroughtest for him?' Therefore it [sc. the mem] was closed. Straightway the earth exclaimed: 'Sovereign of the Universe! Let me utter song before Thee instead of this righteous man [Hezekiah], and make him the Messiah.' So it broke into song before Him, as it is written, From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous. Then the Prince of the Universe said to Him: 'Sovereign of the Universe! It [the earth] hath fulfilled Thy desire [for songs of praise] on behalf of this righteous man.' But a heavenly Voice cried out, 'It is my secret, it is my secret.' To which the prophet rejoined, 'Woe is me, woe is me: how long [must we wait]?' The heavenly Voice [again] cried out, 'The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously: which Raba — others say, R. Isaac — interpreted: until there come spoilers, and spoilers of the spoilers. (b.San. 94a)

Here the Talmud specifically tells us that Hezekiah was not the Messianic figure mentioned in Isaiah 9:6-7 because of the closed final mem and because of a secret of Elohim which is revealed by the use of a final MEM in this word.

Now it is important to understand that in Rabbinic thought, the MEM is associated with the womb. As we read in the Sefer Yetzirah:

Three Mothers Alef, Mem, Shin are in the body of male and female: Fire and Water and Air. Head was created from Fire,

*and Womb was created from Water, and Chest was created from Air, balancing the scales between them.
(Sefer Yetzirah 3:6)*

Furthermore the Zohar teaches that the final MEM in ADAM represents the female side which was taken from Adam to make woman:

*Further, the words “let us make man” may be taken to signify that Elohim imparted to the lower beings who came from the side of the upper world the secret of forming the divine name “Adam”, which embraces the upper and the lower in virtue of its three letters, aleph, daleth, and final MEM. When these three letters descended below, together in their complete form, the name Adam was found to comprise male and female. The female was attached to the side of the male until Elohim cast him into a deep slumber, during which he lay on the site of the Temple. God then sawed her off from him and adorned her like a bride and brought her to him, as it is written, “And he took one of his sides and closed up the place with flesh.” (Gen. 2:21).
(Zohar 1:34b)*

The Bahir elaborates that not only does a MEM represent a womb, but an open MEM represents an open womb and a closed MEM represents a closed womb:

The open Mem. What is the open Mem ? It includes both male and female. What is the closed Mem ? It is made like a womb from above. But Rabbi Rahumai said that the womb is like the letter Teth . He said it is like a Teth on the inside, while I say that it is like a Mem on the outside.

What is a Mem? Do not read Mem, but Mayim (water). Just like water is wet, so is the womb always wet. Why does the open Mem include both male and female, while the closed Mem is male? This teaches us that the Mem is primarily male. The opening was then added to it for the sake of the female. Just like the male cannot give birth, so the closed MEM cannot give birth. And just like the female has an opening with which

to give birth, so can the open MEM give birth. The MEM is therefore open and closed.
(Bahir 84-85)

Messiah would be born to the closed womb of a virgin. The closed MEM (closed womb) birth described in Isaiah 9:6-7 points us back to the virgin birth described in Isaiah 7:14.

The truth is that the evidence is overwhelming that this verse is a Messianic prophecy and does in fact refer to a virgin birth of the Messiah. This can be shown in three ways:

The first is the meaning of the Hebrew word ALMA and why it would be used here.

The second is the reading of the other ancient versions of Isaiah 7:14.

And the third is the overall context of this passage.

Now great controversy surrounds the Hebrew word ALMA in Isaiah 7:14.

It has been suggested that the Hebrew word "ALMA" simply means "young woman" and that if Isaiah had intended to refer to a "virgin" he would have used the Hebrew word BETULAH. SO the question arises, what is an ALMA? What is a BETULAH and why would Isaiah use the word ALMA rather than BETULAH if it were to be a virgin birth?

The word ALMA refers to a young unmarried woman one of whose characteristics is virginity. There is no instance where the word ALMA is used to refer to a non-virgin. In such passages as Gen. 24:43 (compare Gen. 24:43 with 24:16 where BETULAH appears) and Song 1:3; 6:8 ALMA clearly refers to virgins. In fact the Hebrew Publishing Company Translation of 1916 translates ALMA as "virgin" in Gen. 24:43 and in Song 1:3; 6:8. Moreover an ancient Ugaritic tablet was discovered which uses ALMA in synonymous poetic parallelism as the synonymous parallel to the cognate of BETULAH. For this reason one of the worlds leading Semitists, the late Dr. Cyrus Gordon who was Jewish and did NOT believe in the virgin birth of Yeshua maintains that Is. 7:14 may be translated as "virgin" (Alma in Isaiah 7:14;

Gordon, Cyrus H.; JBR 21:106). So why would Isaiah have used ALMA rather than BETULAH? Because a BETULAH can be a young married woman who is not a virgin, but pure because she is married (as in Joel 1:8).

Now it has been suggested that Isaiah 7:14 refers not to a birth to a "virgin" but to a birth to a "young woman".

In order to understand how this passage was understood anciently we should look at the other ancient versions of the book of Isaiah. The Aramaic Peshitta Tanak has:

*Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign;
Behold, a virgin [B'TULTA] shall conceive, and bear a son,
And call his name Immanuel.
(Is. 7:14)*

The Aramaic word B'TULTA clearly means "virgin" and not simply "young lady".

Now lets look at the Greek Septuagint reading:

*Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign;
Behold, a virgin [PARTHENOS] shall conceive,
and bear a son, and call his name Immanuel.
(Is. 7:14)*

The Greek PARTHENOS means "virgin" and not simply "young lady".

Thus both the ancient Aramaic and ancient Greek versions of Isaiah 7:14 understand ALMA here to refer to a virgin.

Finally we must examine the context of Isaiah 7:14. First I will want to examine the immediate context of Isaiah 7 and then the broader context of this whole section of Isaiah.

Literal translation of Hebrew of Is. 7:14:

Therefore the Lord himself shall give to you(pl) a sign:

*behold the ALMA will conceive and bear a son
and she will call his name Immanuel.*

"you" in verse 14 is plural. By contrast King Achaz is singular you in verses 11 and 16-17. The sign to Achaz was that before a child should know how to choose good from bad, the siege would end (16-17). That child was NOT be the newborn child of verse 14 the child is Isaiah's son Sh'ar-Yashuv from Isaiah 7:3. The prophecy of Is. 7:14 is not addressed only to Achaz as is the rest of the prophecy.

The following literal translation clears things up: (s)=singular
(pl)=plural

*7:3a Then YHWH said to Isaiah, "Go out now to meet
Achaz, you(s) and Shear-Jashub your(s) son...*

7:10 ...YHWH spoke again to Achaz saying:

*7:11 "Ask a sign for yourself(s) from YHWH your(s) God;
ask it either in the depth or in the height above."*

7:12 But Achaz said: "I will not ask, nor will I test YHWH"

*7:13 Then he said: "Hear now, O House of David! Is it a small
thing for you(pl) to weary men, but will you(pl) weary my God
also?"*

*7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give to you(pl) a sign:
behold the ALMA will conceive and bear a son and she will
call his name Immanuel.*

*7:15 Curds and honey He shall eat, that he may know to refuse
the evil and choose the good.*

*7:16 For behold before the child shall know to refuse the evil
and choose the good, the land that you(s) dread will be
forsaken by both her kings.*

*7:17 YHWH will bring the King of Assyria upon you(s) and
your(s) people and your(s) father's house...*

Note the clear distinction to what is addressed to you(pl) and what is addressed to you(s) (Achaz) and how this creates a distinction between the newborn in verse 14 and the child in verse 16. Thus the birth in Is. 7:14 is not a sign to Achaz alone.

Isaiah 8:8-9:7 also speaks of this same "Immanuel" figure. Thus it is clear that the "Immanuel" of Is. 7:14 & 8:8 is also the child born in Isaiah 9:6-7.

Moreover the Talmud applies Is. 8:14 to Messiah:

Judah and Hezekiah, the sons of R. Hiyya, once sat at table with Rabbi and uttered not a word. Whereupon he said: Give the young men plenty of strong wine, so that they may say something. When the wine took effect, they began by saying: The son of David cannot appear ere the two ruling houses in Israel shall have come to an end, viz., the Exilarchate, in Babylon and the Patriarchate in Palestine, for it is written, And he shall be for a Sanctuary, for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both houses of Israel (Is. 8:14). Thereupon he [Rabbi] exclaimed: You throw thorns in my eyes, my children! At this, R. Hiyya [his disciple] remarked: Master, be not angered, for the numerical value of the letters of yayin is seventy, and likewise the letters of sod: When yayin [wine] goes in, sod [secrets] comes out. (b.San. 38a)

Also Targum Jonathan on Isaiah applies Is. 9:6-7 to the Messiah as well.

Finally the figure in Isaiah 9:6-7 certainly seems to be the same as that in Is. 11:1f. This is important because EVERYONE agrees that Is. 11:1f refers to the Messiah.

Thus by examining the overall context of Isaiah 7:14 it becomes clear that Isaiah 7:14 is indeed a messianic prophecy which prophecies of the virgin birth of the Messiah.

Further support is found in the very first Messianic Prophecy in the Torah:

14 And YHWH Elohim said unto the serpent: Because you have done this, cursed are you from among all cattle, and from among all beasts of the field. Upon your belly shall you go, and dust shall you eat all the days of your life.

*15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. They shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise their heel.
(Gen. 3:14-15)*

This passage makes a very surprising reference to the seed not of a man, but of a woman.

The Targum Yerushalami interprets verse 15 as follows:

And it shall be that when the sons of the woman study the Torah diligently and obey its injunctions, they will direct themselves to smite you on the head and slay you; but when the sons of the woman forsake the commandments of the Torah and do not obey its injunctions, you will direct yourself to bite them on the heel and afflict them. However, there will be a remedy for the sons of the woman, but for you, serpent, there will be no remedy. They shall make peace with one another in the end, in the very end of days, in the days of the King Messiah.

Targum Psuedo-Jonathan has a similar reading:

And it shall be that when the sons of the woman study the Torah diligently and obey its injunctions, they will direct themselves to smite you on the head and slay you; but when the sons of the woman forsake the commandments of the Torah and do not obey its injunctions, you will direct yourself to bite them on the heel and afflict them. However, there will be a remedy for the sons of the woman, but for you, serpent, there will be no remedy. They shall make peace with one another in the end, in the very end of days, in the days of the King Messiah.

Both interpret the “seed” of the woman as those who study the Torah and obey it, however in doing so they “make peace with one another” and these are described as “the days of King Messiah.” It must be remembered that there is an allegorical relationship between the Messiah and Israel. Thus the Targum identifies Torah Observant Israel with the Messiah in this passage as the “seed” of the woman.

In fact the Midrash Rabbah makes this identification of the “seed” of the woman as the Messiah clear in its comment to Gen. 23:5 referring to the naming of Seth it says:

AND SHE CALLED HIS NAME SETH: FOR GOD HATH APPOINTED ME ANOTHER SEED, etc. R. Tanhuma said in the name of Samuel Kozith: [She hinted at] that seed which would arise from another source, viz. the king Messiah. (Genesis Rabbah 23:5)

There can be little doubt that the “seed which would arise from another source” here is Eve’s “seed” mentioned in Genesis 3:15, the seed of a woman, the Messiah.

Thus we learn that the Messiah would be the seed of a woman, born to a woman with a closed rather than an open womb, a virgin.

Appendix II

The Son of Elohim Prophecy

In the Wisdom of Solomon

Wisdom of Solomon claims to be a book written by Solomon (Wisdom 9:7-8). Even skeptics date the book in the first or second century BCE. Over a hundred years before the life of Yeshua.

According to Melito in the second century CE, the Wisdom of Solomon was then considered canonical by both Jews and Christians. The Hebrew version of the Wisdom of Solomon is also mentioned by Ramban (1194-1270 CE) in the preface to his commentary on the Torah. He also quotes from the book.

Not only was the Wisdom of Solomon originally written in Hebrew but the original Hebrew survived until at least 1611. The original 1611 edition of the King James Version has a marginal note to the word “pricked” in Wisdom of Solomon 16:11 which says “Hebr. stung.”

Now the Greek of Wisdom 16:11 has enekentronto “they were pricked” (KJV, Brenton) or “they were bitten” (RSV, NEB) (the NAB has “they were stung”). Now this word can be translated “stung” (as in the NAB) but it can also be translated “pricked” as the KJV translators chose to translate in the main text. The footnote indicates that that original Hebrew does in fact have a word meaning “sting” and not “prick” here. The KJV footnote would indicate that the original Hebrew word was PARASH (Strong’s 6567) the only Hebrew word for “sting” (as we see it in Prov. 23:32).

The Aramaic Peshitta translator must have misread PARASH (Strong’s 6567) “sting” as PARASH (Strong’s 6566) “to break in pieces”. The Aramaic Peshitta translator thus wrongly translated PATZAIT “split, opened”.

The Aramaic has mistranslated the original Hebrew word, and therefore could not have been translated from the Greek. This means

that our Aramaic Peshitta version is an Aramaic translation made directly from the Hebrew. Since these are cognate languages with much vocabulary and grammar in common, the Aramaic translation gives us a much better witness as to the original Hebrew than does the Greek. And were it not for this one marginal note made by the original 1611 KJV translators, we would not have this proof that the Aramaic was translated directly from the Hebrew rather than from the Greek. Conversely the mistranslation of this word in the Aramaic Peshitta proves the veracity of the KJV marginal note.

Now there is an amazing Messianic Prophecy found in The Wisdom of Solomon 2:12-22 which relates to a “Son of Elohim” figure. The prophecy reads as follows:

12: Therefore let us trouble the Righteous One; because he is not pleasant to us, and he stands up against our doings: and he reviles us for our transgression of the Torah, and records against us the trespasses of our audacity.

13: He professes that the knowledge of Elohim is his: and he says concerning himself "I am the Son of Elohim"

14: He is a rebuker of our thoughts.

15: He is heavy upon us even to behold: because his way of life is not like others, his ways are different.

16: We are esteemed by him as impure: he abstained from our ways like from impurity: he blesses the ways and the end of the righteous, and he boasts that Elohim is his father.

17: Let us see if his words are true: and let us test him by his departure.

18: For if the Righteous One is the Son of Elohim, he will receive him, and deliver him from the hand of those who rise up against him.

19: With despitefulness and with torment let us examine him, that we may know the concern of his humility, and be harmful to him.

20: To a shameful death let us condemn him: we shall be upon him and shall question his words.

21: These insipid things they did think, and were deceived: because their own wickedness has blinded them.

22: And they did not know the mysteries of Elohim, neither hoped they for the reward of the pure, and they did not discern an old soul without blemish.

(Wisdom of Solomon 2:12-22 - from my ongoing work on the HRV Apocrypha- Translated from the Peshitta Aramaic)

There are two passages worth some special attention in light of Messianic prophecy:

15: He is heavy upon us even to behold: because his way of life is not like others, his ways are different.

16: We are esteemed by him as impure: he abstained from our ways like from impurity: he blesses the ways and the end of the righteous, and he boasts that Elohim is his father.

17: Let us see if his words are true: and let us test him by his departure.

(Wisdom 2:15-17 HRV)

This actually recalls an account in the Torah concerning the life of Joseph. When his brothers cast Joseph into the pit we read:

20 Come now therefore and let us slay him, and cast him into one of the pits. And we will say, An evil beast has devoured him. And we shall see what will become of his dreams.

(Gen. 37:20 HRV)

There is great Messianic significance to this account. Joseph's life was a type of the first coming of Messiah which parallels the Rabbinical Messiah ben Yoseph. The Suffering Messiah is called Messiah ben Yoseph because his brothers were redeemed by his suffering.

Like Joseph the Patriarch, Yeshua was betrayed by his own for a few pieces of silver (Gen. 37:28) he was cast into "the pit" (death) and raised back up so that he might redeem his brothers, Like Joseph, Yeshua's teaching and revelation angered his brothers, who sought to put his claims to the test by casting him into the pit (of death).

In another verse Wisdom of Solomon continues:

*18: For if the Righteous One is the Son of Elohim, he will receive him, and deliver him from the hand of those who rise up against him.
(Wisdom 2:18 HRV)*

This strongly parallels a Messianic prophecy from chapter 6 found in Psalm 22:

*9 (22:8) Let him commit himself unto YHWH; let Him rescue him; let Him deliver him: seeing He delights in him.
(Ps. 22:9 (8) HRV)*

Appendix III

Lowly and Riding Upon an Ass

In the book of Zechariah we read the following prophecy:

*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Tziyon!
Shout, O daughter of Yerushalayim!
Behold, your king comes unto you:
He is triumphant, and victorious, lowly,
and riding upon an ass—
even upon a colt, the foal of an ass.
(Zech. 9:9 HRV)*

Zech. 9:9 is cited as a Messianic prophecy in the Talmud:

*R. Alexandri said: Rabbi Joshua opposed two verses:
Is is written: And behold, one like the son of man
came with the clouds of heaven. (Dan. 7:13)
Whilst it is written: [behold, your king comes to you...]
lowly, and riding upon an ass! (Zech. 9:9)
(b.San. 98a)*

As well as in the Midrash Rabba:

*AND I HAVE AN OX, AND AN ASS, etc. (Gen. 32:6)....
ASS refers to the royal Messiah, for it says of him,
Lowly, and riding upon an ass (Zech. 9:9);
(Genesis Rabbah LXXXV:6)*

The Midrash Rabbah also ties the passage to a fulfillment of “binding his foal to the vine, and washing his robe in the blood of the grape” (Gen. 49:11):

*BINDING HIS FOAL (‘IRO) UNTO THE VINE (Gen. 49:11)
.... R. Nehemiah interpreted: BINDING ‘IRO UNTO THE
VINE means: He [God] binds to the vine [sc. Israel] ‘iro,
which alludes to, ‘the city (ha-’ir) which I have chosen. AND
BENI ATHONO UNTO THE CHOICE VINE means: [morally]
strong sons (banim ethanim) will spring from him. The Rabbis*

*interpreted: 'I,' [said God], 'am bound to the vine and the choice vine [Israel]. HIS FOAL AND HIS COLT intimate: when he will come of whom it is written, Lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass (Zech. 9:9). HE WASHETH HIS GARMENTS IN WINE, intimates that he [the Messiah] will compose for them words of Torah; AND HIS VESTURE IN THE BLOOD OF GRAPES-that he will restore to them their errors.
(Genesis Rabbah XCVIII:9)*

The Zohar also ties these same verses (Zech. 9:9 & Gen. 49:11) together as Messianic Prophecy:

*Binding his foal unto the vine. (Gen. 49:11)
The vine is the community of Israel, so called also in the verse:
"You did remove a vine from Egypt" (Ps. 80:9).
By "his foal" is meant the Messiah, ...
Hence it is written of him that he will be
"poor and riding on an ass and on
a young ass's colt" (Zech. 9:9)
"Colt" and "ass" are two crowns by virtue of which the
Gentiles have dominion....
he rides upon an ass and upon a colt, to overthrow
the strength of the Gentiles...
(Zohar 1:238a)*

The Zohar also ties Gen. 49:11 to "You did remove a vine from Egypt" (Ps. 80:9). This is a reference back to Torah which says:

*22 Yosef is a fruitful vine, a fruitful vine by a fountain; its branches run over the wall.
23 The archers have dealt bitterly with him, and shot at him, and hated him,
24 But his bow abode firm. And the arms of his hands were made supple by the hands of the Mighty One of Ya'akov; from there, from the Shepherd--the Stone of Yisra'el.
25 Even by the El of your father who shall help you, and by Shaddai, who shall bless you with blessings of heaven above: blessings of the deep that couches beneath; blessings of the breasts, and of the womb.*

*26 The blessings of your father are mighty, beyond the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills. They shall be on the head of Yosef, and on the crown of the head of the prince, among his brothers.
(Gen. 49:22-26 HRV))*

Now just a few verses above this we read:

*9 Y'hudah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you are gone up. He stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as a lioness: who shall rouse him up?
10 The scepter shall not depart from Y'hudah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes. And unto him, shall the obedience of the peoples be.
11 Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine, he washes his garments in wine, and his vesture in the blood of grapes.
12 His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.
(Gen. 49:9-12 HRV)*

Who is this “Shiloh”?

This Gemara also asks “What is Messiah’s name?” Rabbi Shila offers the answer: “His name is Shiloh, for it is written, ‘until Shiloh comes.’” (b.San. 98b)

This Gemara is citing Genesis 49:10:

*The scepter shall not depart from Judah,
nor the staff from between his feet,
until Shiloh comes;
and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.*

The Targums (Onkelos, Pseudo-Jonathan and Yerushalmi) all have “until Messiah comes” in place of “until Shiloh comes”.

The word “Shiloh” has a gematria (numerical value) of 345 which is the same as the value of “HaShem” (“the name”) and El Shaddai. The

phrase “Shiloh comes” has a gematria of 358 which is the same as the gematria for “Messiah and “Moses” (because the Messiah is “the prophet like Moses” (Deut. 18:18). This is because “the name” of Messiah is imbedded in the phrase “until Shiloh comes.”

The Zohar says of Gen. 49:10:

*... ”the scepter” referring to the Messiah of the House of Judah, and “the staff” to the Messiah of the House of Joseph. “Until Shiloh comes”, this is Moses, the gematria of Shiloh and Moses being the same [358].
(Zohar 1:25)*

*The word Shiloh, here, is spelt with both a yod and a he, to allude to the holy supernal name, Yah, by which the Shekinah shall rise...
(Zohar 1:237)*

Thus the Zohar teaches us that in Genesis 49:10 we have the two Messiahs (or the two comings of Messiah) represented as a “scepter” and a “staff” which are one “Shiloh” and that the one “Shiloh” has Yah within him.

You may notice a parallel between the “scepter” and “staff” of the two Messiah’s and the “two sticks” of the two houses of Israel in Ezekiel 37.

Note the fact that the figure called Shiloh binds his foal upon a vine, clearly the vine is Yosef mentioned just a few verses later that grows over the wall (Gen. 49:22) or as we read in Psalm 80:8, 11, the “sea”:

*9 (80:8) You did pluck up a vine out of Egypt, You did drive out the nations, and did plant it.
10 (80:9) You did clear a place before it, and it took deep root, and filled the land.
11 (80:10) The mountains were covered with the shadow of it, and the mighty cedars with the boughs thereof.*

*12 (80:11) She sent out her branches unto the sea, and her
shoots unto the River.
(Ps. 80:9-12(8-11))*

Notice that we have the two primary tribes of the two Houses of Israel here, representing the two comings of Messiah. Here we also have represented the two comings of Messiah, as they parallel the Two Messiah Theory.